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THE BEQUEST OF  
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# LOVE'S MARTYRDOM:

*A Play, in Five Acts.*

BY

JOHN SAUNDERS,

LATE EDITOR OF THE PEOPLE'S JOURNAL.

---

LONDON:  
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193 PICCADILLY.

MDCCCLV.

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TO  
JAMES STANSFELD, ESQ.

FULHAM,

THESE PAGES,

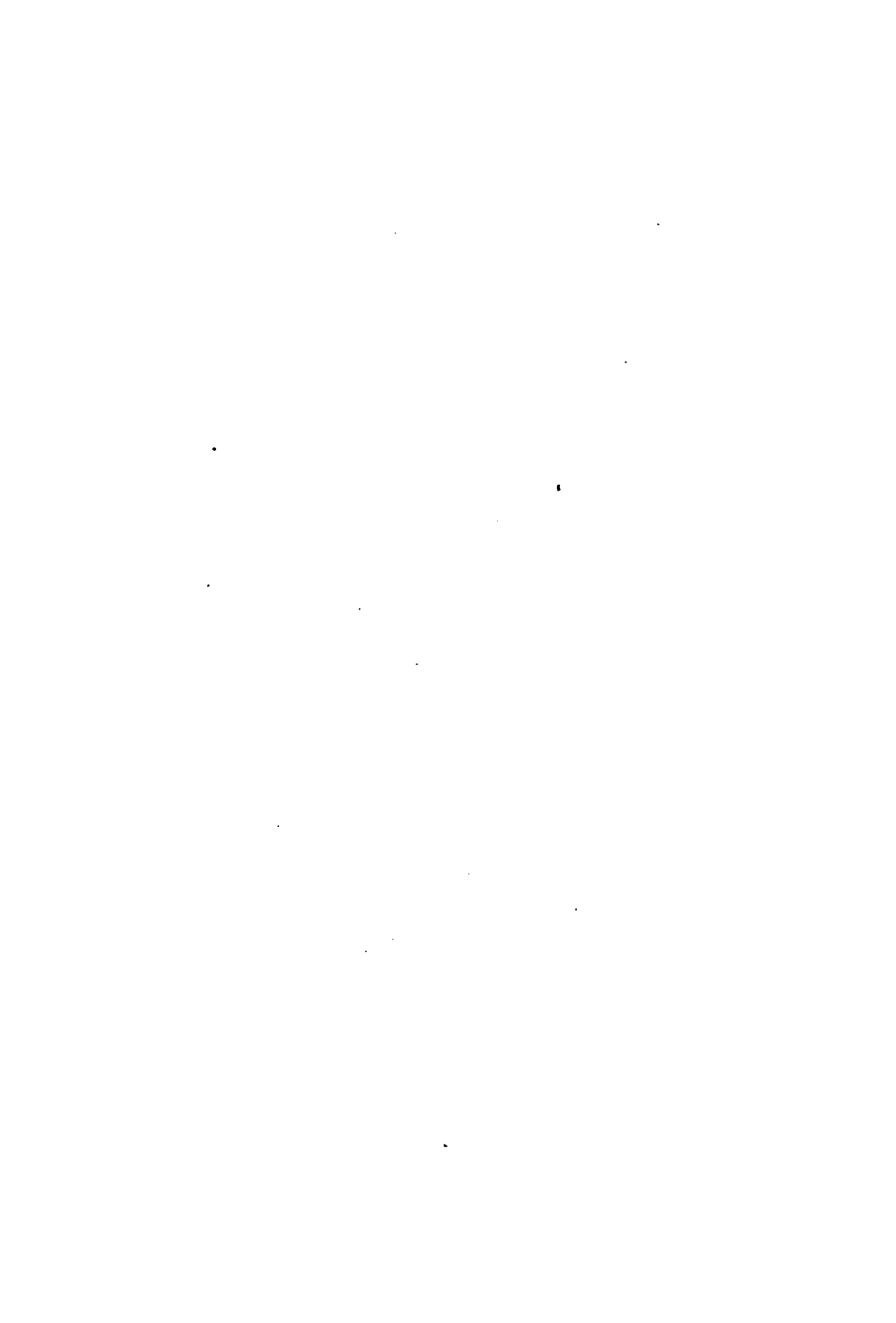
WHICH HAVE OWED SO MUCH, DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY,

TO HIS SYMPATHY AND JUDGMENT,

ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY HIS FRIEND,

JOHN SAUNDERS.





## Persons represented.

---

FRANKLYN, *a gentleman of Lincoln, deformed.*

CLARENCE FRANKLYN, *his younger brother.*

LANEHAM, *an artist.*

FRELOVE.

SIR SIMON RANKEL.

PHILIP, *steward to Franklyn.*

Poet.

Musician.

TASSEL, *an upholsterer.*

CUTBUSH, *a gardener.*

GOLDBY, *a jeweller.*

Two Ruffians.

MARGARET, *affianced to Franklyn.*

HESTER, *her cousin.*

JULIA, *sister to Laneham.*

BERTHA, *an aged attendant upon Laneham.*

ALICE, *waiting-woman to Margaret.*

Priest, Guests, Tradesmen, Workmen, Servants, &c.

SCENE—*Lincoln.*



# LOVE'S MARTYRDOM.

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## ACT I.

SCENE I. *Hall in FRANKLYN'S house. Workmen busy in reparations. Hangings half hung. Tradesmen passing to and from FRANKLYN on matters connected with his approaching marriage.*

*Enter, from the back, TASSEL. Some of the Tradesmen collect about him.*

TASSEL.

There is no pleasing him! I do believe  
He'd like a bran-new world for her to tread on,  
Angels attendant on her every wish!

FIRST TRADESMAN.

What now?

TASSEL.

My tapestry, sought with such care  
For the new bride's boudoir, won't do, he says:  
Too rich for others, 'tis too poor for her.  
So night and day to London I must ride,  
Ransack its stores, and yet be back again  
Before the marriage, which is now so near.

*Enter CUTBUSH, wiping his face.*

FIRST TRADESMAN.

Warm work, eh?

CUTBUSH.

Warm! I am red-hot with rage.  
 These new parterres—five weeks I have been at 'em,—  
 Five seconds undoes all. He makes his own!  
 Such things! Why, mine were as a ruler straight,  
 And mathematically square; nicely boxed,  
 And hedged, and gravelled: and one glance told all.  
 But his! no earthquake plays such monstrous pranks.  
 'Up with the soil just here; down there,' he cries.  
 'Now curve me this walk, and get rid of that.  
 And then, to finish, sprinkle me some trees,  
 Like happy accidents, about the grass:'  
 As though I'd got 'em in my bag like seeds. [*All laugh.*]  
 And then again says he: 'Poor Nature's put  
 In a straight waistcoat in this plan of yours.  
 Oh, let her loose before my lady sees her.' [*All laugh.*]

*Enter POET and MUSICIAN, quarrelling.*

POET.

No, sir, your music 'twas he laughed at! Yes.

MUSICIAN.

No, sir, your verses.

FIRST TRADESMAN.

What's the matter?

POET.

Why, you see,

We meditated a surprise to-day  
 For Master Franklyn.

MUSICIAN.

Yes, and for ourselves

Some profit.

POET (*impatiently*).

Well, well! an epithalamium

I was to write—

MUSICIAN.

And I to music set it.

POET.

We brought it now. But stay; I'll read the whole.

ALL.

No, no!

CUTBUSH.

The upshot of the whole will do.

POET.

He courteously received us. But as soon  
As he glanced o'er the *notes*—

MUSICIAN (*aside to the others*).

The *words*, believe me.

POET.

Then he burst out with an unseemly roar!  
And though he covered it with some excuse,  
He not the less declined our labour's fruit.

MUSICIAN.

But paid us all the same.

POET.

'Good friends,' says he;  
'In idly seeking the Parnassean stream,  
Not always do we stumble on Pactolus.  
But here *is* gold. Excuse my hint. Farewell.'

CUTBUSH.

Just like him! No respect for others' feelings,  
Though wincing at the slightest touch himself.

FIRST TRADESMAN.

A hopeful husband; and for such a bride:  
O'erbearing!

SECOND TRADESMAN.

Moody!

TASSEL.

Irritable!

CUTBUSH.

Proud!

POET.

Sarcastic!

MUSICIAN.

And revengeful!

POET.

True, quite true!

Yet, be considerate. [*Whispering and looking round.*]

When Nature turns

One's body to a bow [*pointing to his back*], what wonder if  
The soul becomes an arrow to it? Eh? [*All laugh.*]

TASSEL.

Still, 'tis for *her*, you know, and not himself,  
That he exacts so much.

POET (*whispering*).

Oh, if he can

But dazzle her with worship and with splendour,  
Charm, yet distract, her eye, there is less chance

That he himself will be too closely scanned.  
Now do you take me?

ALL.

Hum! ha!

TASSEL (*looking off*).

Here is the steward, Philip. Better not  
Be seen thus talking.

ALL.

No! [*They disperse different ways.*]

*Enter PHILIP followed by ALICE.*

ALICE.

All ready, Philip? May we take possession?  
Your future mistress comes!

PHILIP.

Indeed!

ALICE.

Yes—there!

[*Producing a miniature.*]

PHILIP.

A goodly portrait. Is it for my master? [ALICE nods.]  
I cannot like this match, do what I will.

ALICE.

Doubt you my lady?

PHILIP.

No; but I doubt him.

“It is a match; but scarcely are there mates.  
“You know I love him. Why, these veins contain  
“No drop of blood but yearns to him. I serve  
“Him not for gain. I am his foster-brother.



" From the same breast we sucked, learned in one school.  
 " Well, much I fear he is not fit to wed.  
 " She will not bear his tempers nor his moods :  
 " They're nought to me ; or, if they are, one word  
 " Such as he speaks makes me the happier man.  
 " She'll see him vexed, and wonder at his rage !  
 " She'll see him angry, and resent the storm,  
 " 'Till round herself it gathers, and o'erwhelms her !" \*  
 Such moody tempers are not fit to wed.

ALICE.

And yet he seems so kind and generous !

PHILIP.

See yonder fire ? how fitful is its flame !  
 It is not half so fitful as his mind.  
 Mark, too, beneath the brilliancy and gloom,  
 The ruddy glow still liveth at the heart.  
 It is our common comfort, frequent joy ;  
 For oft it draws the merry circle round,  
 Making each radiant face more radiant still.  
 But let that self-same fire o'erleap its bounds,  
 What ruin in the blaze, as up and up  
 With its fast-climbing fingers still it goes,  
 Hissing and roaring, mounting over all !  
 Behold my master in his different moods.

ALICE.

Here's comfort, truly, for a bride elect.  
 What can it mean ?

PHILIP.

Between ourselves, just this :  
 He doubts all love, his own heart full the while.

\* The lines marked with double inverted commas are to be omitted throughout in representation.

ALICE.  
Not jealous ?

PHILIP.  
No.

ALICE.  
I hope not ; for my lady  
Would ill bear to be doubted. " Does he love her ?

PHILIP.  
" Love her ! I've said this match scarce pleases me ;  
" Yet might it not go on, I'd wish him dead :  
" Such is his love, such then would be his life.

ALICE.  
" Then she shall love him, Philip, that she shall !  
" And when she loves him—mark a woman's faith :  
" Where true love is, all excellence must be ;  
" Where love is not, no excellence we see.

PHILIP.  
" Well, Alice, may it prove so !" Yet, I fear  
Old memories still linger in his heart,  
And wait, like poisonous seeds, their hour to grow.  
This younger brother, Clarence, who has just  
Returned from college,—soft ! he's here ! This way !  
I'll wait for you until you leave my master,  
Then tell you more. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter CLARENCE and FREELOVE laughing. They are in travelling dresses, with whips, spurs, &c.*

FREELOVE.  
Confess, now, that one's mistress may be left  
An hour—a day,—who knows ? perhaps a week,—  
And we still live.

CLARENCE.

Yet was I sorry to—

FREELOVE.

Leave Julia? Oh, of course. The whole first mile  
 You and the misty Morn out-wept each other;  
 But both cleared in the second. Lurking smiles  
 Lit up odd corners of the mouth and sky;  
 Until, the third mile passed, ye both blazed forth;  
 And which was merriest I could scarcely say,  
 The unhappy Morn, or broken-hearted Lover! [*They laugh.*]

CLARENCE (*looking round*).

No servants! Stay, I'll learn which are our rooms. [*Going.*]  
 Ha! ha! You make me laugh, but I was sorry.  
 Poor Julia!

FREELOVE.

Oh, I'll help you swear to that,  
 When you return to her. Oh, very sorry. [*They laugh.*]  
 [*Exit CLARENCE.*]

If he could hear the laugh within my soul,  
 He'd be less mirthful in his echoings.  
 Oh, little dreams he that I too love Julia;  
 Have tried to win her, and been so rejected  
 That every word she spake like molten drops  
 Fell on the naked soul I bared before her!  
 Well, it is clear I have not worked in vain.  
 He'll soon forget her.  
 Some bar impassable against return;  
 That were the policy. Some newer love:  
 Or, best of all, some tempting marriage tie.  
 "Faith, he's too pliant! lacks the fibrous pith  
 "To keep the form to which one bends his will.

“Turned wrong to-day, he may turn right to-morrow.”  
All's dark as yet. But I will find a path,—  
Will sleepless watch for't. Julia shall be mine:  
Ay, shall she, by my soul! Again, I swear it!

*Re-enter CLARENCE agitated.*

CLARENCE.

He's here!

FREELOVE.

Who?

CLARENCE.

Julia's brother! just returned  
From his art-wanderings in the Switzer land.

FREELOVE.

Knows he of Julia's flight from where he left her?

CLARENCE.

I fear he does.

FREELOVE.

But has no thought of you?

CLARENCE.

I trust not.

FREELOVE.

Then all's well, if you keep quiet.  
“Troubles, like bashful woers, wanted not,  
“Oft disappear with mere not-noticing.”  
What brings him now?

CLARENCE.

A picture he has painted for my brother;  
And which his servant made such mystery of,  
I could not help but steal a hurried glance:  
You'll scarce believe me,—I scarce trust myself,—

But 'twas a marriage ; Margaret the bride ;  
 And I the groom ; while Franklyn joined our hands !  
 I had no time for more.

FREELOVE (*aside*).

Aha ! 'light breaks !

[*To CLARENCE.*] What, Franklyn give to you his future  
 bride !

Were there love-passages 'twixt you and her ?

CLARENCE.

Oh, play.

FREELOVE (*aside*).

Indeed !

CLARENCE.

Mere youthful toying.

FREELOVE (*aside*).

Oh !

CLARENCE.

" 'Twas sweet to watch her. No chameleon changed  
 " More frequently its hues, and as each one  
 " Revealed new beauties to be new-admired,  
 " All loved her and all spoiled her."  
 See, here's a relic of that sportive time.

[*Showing a locket with a ribbon attached.*]

'Twas but the other day I found it lying  
 Among old dusty relics, quite forgotten.

FREELOVE.

What is't ?

CLARENCE.

Look ! [*He touches a secret spring, and it opens.*  
 Margaret's hair entwined with mine,  
 Forming the linked initials of our names.

FREELOVE.

And given by Margaret?

CLARENCE.

Yes, when our fathers nipped  
Our budding loves, betrothing her to Franklyn.  
You see beneath the tender word, 'Farewell!'

FREELOVE.

'Tis pretty the design; I'd like to sketch it:  
I want to send some birth-day token home.

[CLARENCE *hands it to him.*

Did Franklyn know of this?

CLARENCE (*laughing*).

That would have spoiled the jest, as then we thought it.

FREELOVE (*aside*).

And my jest too. This locket will be useful.  
[*To CLARENCE.*] Franklyn was jealous then?

CLARENCE.

He was.

FREELOVE (*aside*).

Still better!

Clarence has loved her! Franklyn has been jealous!  
[*To CLARENCE.*] But what then means the picture? Has  
he thought  
The time might come he'd give her unto you?  
Come, come, what means it?

CLARENCE.

If I must speak, this:—

When Margaret's father, some two years ago,  
A widower in bad health, sought milder skies,

He went to Genoa, took my brother with him—  
And, dying there, left Margaret ward to Franklyn,  
Already her betrothed.

On his return, a short three months ago,  
Moved by her father's boundless trust and love,  
He sent for me ('twas then, too, I remember,  
Laneham and he had been in converse close,  
Settling, no doubt, this picture should be painted):  
I went. He bade me, if I loved her, win her,  
And she was mine.

FREELOVE.

“Indeed! So then you failed?”

“Certain, your brother has a manly face,  
“While yours, though handsomer, 's more boyish too;  
“But, then, his form!—Ah, 'tis the oft-told tale,  
“The subtlest tongue not fairest person wins.

CLARENCE.

“Thy tongue runs fast; I never said I failed.”

FREELOVE.

What then? Did you refuse her?

CLARENCE.

Yes.

FREELOVE.

And why?

CLARENCE.

Do you forget?

FREELOVE.

Ah, Julia! Yes; heigho!

“So he keeps all. A lucky brother yours!  
“Wealth, Beauty, Power, those smiling graces three  
“Wooing from every side. For us, poor devils!

" I prithee, Clarence, why were we e'er born ?  
 " Young, healthy, vigorous ; fit to hold the race  
 " E'en with the best where'er ambition calls ;  
 " But we are poor. Your brother's rich. Good man !  
 " He sits him down in peace, grows beef and mutton,  
 " Marries, gets children, rocks them when they cry,  
 " Swears at the gout, expounds sage justice-law.  
 " Wouldst thou thus riches use ? Or would thy hand,  
 " Free as it is—too liberal for thy heart,  
 " Give a young spirit, haughty as thine own,—  
 " A brother's too, most warmly loving thee,  
 " Nought but Dependence bitter, shame-steeped bread ?  
 " I know thou wouldst not, or thou'dst ne'er known me.

CLARENCE.

" Freelove, thou wrong'st him in thy friendly zeal.  
 " He is no niggard. Yet I know not why,—  
 " I never have enough. These cursèd debts ;  
 " I dread to tell him, though I know I must.

FREELOVE.

" But stay ; one question : does she love your brother ?

CLARENCE (*hesitatingly*).

" I hope so,—think so,—yes.

FREELOVE.

" You may be wrong.

CLARENCE.

" Why fear'st thou that ?

FREELOVE.

" I know not, but confess

" I would the bond contained a younger name ;  
 " Clarence instead of Edmund. Think'st thou she  
 " Would have repined, thou been disconsolate ?



CLARENCE.

"I cannot think but she my brother loves.

FREELOVE.

"What joy her generous spirit would have known,  
 "So doubly rich to make thee, giving both  
 "Her beauteous self, and that thou'dst use so well,  
 "Her wealth, unto the poor man's almoner.  
 "Well, well, content is all. Now of these debts?"

CLARENCE.

"Damn them! Pray, pray be still. I'm sick of all,  
 "Youth, hope, and life. I know thou mean'st no harm;  
 "I love my brother, think that he loves me;  
 "But yet thy every word stirs in my soul  
 "Thoughts long since buried, as I hoped, for ever;  
 "Black, envious thoughts, still rising thickly up  
 "Betwixt the sun and me. With a high hand  
 "He has restrained me. Every folly made  
 "The subject of a lecture, dull as endless.  
 "My mind quails under his.

FREELOVE.

"Ah, women love  
 "The powerful ever. Now I clearly see  
 "How little chance thou couldst have had with him."

*Enter* SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Your brother, sir, awaits you in his study.

CLARENCE.

We will but change our dresses, and refresh,  
 And presently come to him. [*Exit Servant.*]

“I could not meet him with this feverish brain.”  
Quick! to our rooms. Here's mine, and that is yours.

[*Exit.*]

FREELOVE.

I've sucked my orange dry, so there—the rind!  
Clarence and she have loved, or fancied so,—  
Either will do; and Franklyn's jealous! So, so, so!  
But no more talk: 'tis action needed now,  
And quickly. Time is short. On Saturday  
This hunchback-lover bringeth home his bride,  
As he proposes. Soft now. Let me see.  
Who is there one might get to spread abroad  
Some gossip, till it reach to Franklyn's ears?  
Oh, well remembered! In the court-yard passed me  
My father's crony, old Sir Simon Rankel.  
Give him a thought, he's like a hen with egg,  
Can rest not till 'tis laid, no matter where.  
Oh, I will set him cackling! That well done,  
I'll make this useful. [*Looking at the locket.*]  
I must be wary, seem to take no part,—  
And if I make my friends here but my puppets,  
Beware the puppets dream not of the strings. [*Exit.*]

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SCENE II.

*An antique-looking library, with maps, globes, horns of deer, &c. FRANKLYN discovered, seated by a table, reading a book, which he throws down impatiently as he speaks.*

FRANKLYN.

How slow the days pass on! Five—yet five more

Must intervene 'twixt me and—what? the word  
 My heart still throbs with, though my lips be mute;  
 Bliss, bliss unutterable! Margaret mine;  
 The hunchback I no more: my soul grows straight.

*[Takes the miniature from his bosom.]*

Oh, sudden sunshine e'en where all was light!  
 Most happy semblance! True, thou changest not,  
 Like her clear face, with every change of thought,  
 Playful as grass beneath the summer breeze;  
 No, having caught her smile, thou wert content.  
 Oh, sweet, sweet smile, remain thus changeless ever;  
 There's no way else to paint her sunny soul.  
 And should my spirit darken it? But no,  
 Old habits may prevail, fiends tempt me still;  
 But in Love's charmèd circle I shall stand  
 Safe as in heaven itself, in Margaret's arms.  
 I will be worthy of her. Thinks the world  
 Thus of the wedding of the maid of Lincoln  
 With her crook'd guardian, bitter, harsh, and proud?  
 What are its thoughts to me, who mock them all?  
 Ha! ha! I'll ask its sapience and its love  
 To bless our nuptials with approving nod.  
 What thinks the world? Ha! ha! Sweet Margaret,  
 Look'st thou for Saturday even as I look?  
 Too lovely art thou, or my heart too fond,  
 That knows no stint nor measure in its flow:  
 Strike thou the rock—the waters kiss thy feet.

*Enter SERVANT followed by SIR SIMON RANKEL.*

SERVANT.

Sir Simon Rankel.

*[Exit.]*

SIR SIMON.

Ha, my dear friend, how are you? well, quite well?  
 And in good spirits? Is the day then fix'd?

FRANKLYN.

Yes, Saturday.

SIR SIMON.

Aha! I thought they lied!  
The wedding *will* take place?

FRANKLYN.

Will take place! Will!  
Sir Simon, pray what mean you?

SIR SIMON.

Neighbours here  
Said there would be no wedding—'twas put off.  
I asked their reason—

FRANKLYN.

That let me explain.  
Good souls! their modesty would mar the tale.  
They pity me, Sir Simon.

SIR SIMON.

Pity! you!

FRANKLYN.

They see the many cares that I shall have,  
What with my wealthy, what my lovely bride;  
Compassionate flesh and blood can't bear it. Own  
That even now they pray I may be spared.—  
I thank them.

SIR SIMON.

Thank them! Why, your bride they say  
Would never have consented to the match  
But for the will, by which, if she refused,  
One half her fortune might be claimed by you

FRANKLYN (*aside*).

Venomous reptiles! [*Aloud.*] Oh, you do mistake :  
Doubtless they wished to stop, not spread the lie,  
Thinking that *you* could answer it.

SIR SIMON.

I did ;  
Told them you had renounced all claim—all right—  
To Margaret's fortune, marry whom she would.

FRANKLYN.

And then ?

SIR SIMON.

One coughed ; another blandly smiled ;  
A third, with tight-screwed lips, looked on the ground ;  
A fourth, with lengthened face and arching brow,  
That plainly said, ' Ah, 'twas a sinful world !'  
Looked on her neighbour, whose portentous shrug  
Answered as plainly, he agreed ' It was.'  
But one—

FRANKLYN.

Spake boldly out ?

SIR SIMON.

Why, pretty well.  
' Margaret and your brother loved,' said he,  
' While yet but children ; and your father wished  
Their names upon the bond. And so,' says he,  
' If they are sacrificed'—

FRANKLYN (*aside*).

Ha! sacrificed!

SIR SIMON.

' If she does marry him,—mark, if she does

Marry the'—hem! [*Aside.*] How his eye glares upon me:

I don't half like him. Ah, my foolish tongue!

FRANKLYN (*with forced calmness*).

Marry the—

SIR SIMON.

Pooh! I have forgot the words,  
Nor were they worth remembering.

FRANKLYN (*impatiently*).

Marry the—

SIR SIMON.

Nay, my dear friend, now this is most unkind:  
I came to show how much I felt your wrongs.

FRANKLYN (*fiercely*).

Marry the—

SIR SIMON.

'Hunchback!' then, if you will have it:  
'If she does marry the hunchback then,' said he,  
'We all must own that hunchback is no fool.'

FRANKLYN.

May their own malice eat into their souls!  
May their own venom burst their full-gorged hearts!  
O God, to think how I have toiled and borne,  
What sacrifices made—not for their love—  
I hate them! Pah! the mere thought sickens me:  
No; but to keep my motives, actions, life,  
Too high, too clear, to be thus foully wronged.  
And you, Sir Simon, pray accept my thanks;  
How good of you to bring such pleasant news!  
I warrant me you lost nought by the way;  
Epicure like, you guarded every crumb.

SIR SIMON.

Nay, my dear friend, I've told you—

FRANKLYN (*opening the door and bowing ceremoniously*).

All the news ;

Then pray make no excuse. Your friends—they wait ;

I feel for their anxiety to know

How I received your tidings ; how I looked ;

How moved ; how roared ! Good morning, good Sir  
Simon. [*Exit* SIR SIMON.]

[FRANKLYN *shuts the door violently after him*.]

Thank God he's gone unharmed ! I breathe again.

“ Well, this is well ! I am the common jest.

“ Nay, better still ; they see I feel their scorn

“ Strike home like arrows, poisoned, winged, and barbed,

“ Piercing me through and through. Oh, heaven forgive  
me,—

“ I could have killed that man. Man, did I say ?

“ Oh, yes, the fitting term ; no other speaks

“ So base a compound ! how I loathe the kind !”

What was't he said ? They—sacrificed !—To me !

Bade I not Clarence, if he loved her, woo her ?

Did I not hear him own he loved her not ?

*But loved she him ?* Why comes that question now ?

*Enter* SERVANT.

SERVANT.

“ Here's Master Goldby, sir, the jeweller.

FRANKLYN.

“ Admit him. [SERVANT *shows in* GOLDBY, *and exit*.]

[GOLDBY *hands an open casket to* FRANKLYN.]

“ Ha ! dazlingly beautiful !

“ And worthy are they, as your art can make,

"Of the fair eyes that soon will dazzle them.

[GOLDBY *smiles*.

"Thou overheardest me? I saw thy smile ;

"Doubtless thy neighbours all smile too ; laugh out !

"The hunchback and fair Lincoln's maid ! Ha ! what !

GOLDBY.

"Pardon me, honoured sir, that I did smile

"At the conceit thou uttered'st but now.

"As for thyself and Mistress Margaret,

"I know no worthy heart inside our walls

"That does not honour both, and prophesy

"Ye will indeed be happy.

FRANKLYN.

"Hum ! Farewell.

[*Exit* GOLDBY.

"Calmly his eye met mine : yes, truth was there ;

"He spake too for his fellows. Were he right ! [*Pauses*.

"We oft do cheat ourselves, and build upon

"Some darling lie, still crumbling as we build,

"Forts reason-proof, impregnable to sense,

"Wherein to hide when Truth is in the field.

"This tradesman's kindness touched an answering chord,

"And yet it jarred on my repellant heart.

"Pride ! was it pride ? or rather that once more

"*My* fortress seemed to shake ! Men wish me happy !

"Were it even so, my poor defences fall ;

"Farewell at once my savage dignity."

*Enter* LANEHAM, followed by ATTENDANT, with the picture,  
which he sets down, and exit.

LANEHAM.

My benefactor !



FRANKLYN (*grasping his hand*).

Friend! for thy word chills me,  
 Unless, indeed, thy heart too keeps aloof.  
 [*Aside.*] Again these haunting fancies:—Clarence—Margaret!

I am not superstitious, yet 'tis strange  
 That only now this picture should have come,  
 So long since ordered, and so long forgot.  
 [*To him.*] Well, thou hast done the picture? “Was I not  
 “A wayward lover, yielding her I loved?  
 “Friend, full of mysteries is the human heart;  
 “Believe this one of them:—I bade thee paint  
 “The sacrifice that Fate might ask from me,  
 “With mine own hand that hand to freely give,  
 “Which, were it mine indeed, what wealth could buy!  
 “Ah, friend, 'tis mine! Share with me this great bliss:  
 “Yet perfect love, which still is the serene,  
 “Knows not my fancies, liveth not like me,  
 “In fearful hope, confiding jealously.—  
 “Well, thou hast done the picture?”

LANEHAM.

Yes, forgive me;

I heard but now of your approaching marriage.  
 Oh, let not *this* recal past fears.

FRANKLYN.

My friend!

Better look on it thus, than as I thought  
 To look.

LANEHAM.

Ah, yes.

FRANKLYN.

Come, come; for lovers are

Proverbially impatient: now unveil.

[LANEHAM *raises the curtain.*

Life! life! so real that my spirit shrinks  
 At its own fancy in this vivid shape.  
 Is't ominous, this trembling? or this dread  
 Low boding whisper—'Franklyn, see thy fate!  
 Behold the sacrifice that thou must make!  
 It could not, should not be. I would not lose  
 The one great blessing God in mercy gave  
 For life-long woe amends. Away, then, with it!  
 Conceited braggart! Who was I to rise  
 To such unheard-of virtue,—stand aloof  
 From all mankind to hear my own heart throb  
 In silent anguish, wanting that it gave?  
 I could not do it. To thy knees, proud soul!  
 Unsay the wretched boast, and evermore  
 Con the sharp lesson, 'No, thou couldst not do it.'

LANEHAM.

My hand had withered ere the canvas touched,  
 My art for ever lost e'er practised here,  
 Had I feared this. [*Aside, standing before the picture.*  
 Some pains I have bestowed,  
 Some little portion of a life too short  
 For all I have to learn, on thee, bright mischief.  
 Hopes too, most vain perhaps, yet no less hopes  
 I would not lose to be an emperor—  
 Grew with thee daily:—they must grow elsewhere!  
 Work of my hands, how beautiful thou art!  
 But thou must perish, I live still unknown.

[*Rips the picture with his dagger, in order to cut it  
 from the frame.* FRANKLYN *arrests his arm.*

FRANKLYN.

What wouldst thou do ?

LANEHAM.

Didst thou not call me friend ?

I'd rip my own breast open for thy sake,  
Content to know thou'dst better see my heart,  
Than shall this piece of painted mischief grieve thee.

*[Is again about to cut the picture.*

FRANKLYN.

Laneham, I charge thee, stay ! Friend, friend, I blush  
My weakness thus to have shown thee : but 'tis gone.  
" Why did the world, old schoolmate, so divide us ?  
" Thy love had kept away this damnèd fiend,  
" Haunting me ever in my lonely hours,—  
" Now like Distrust, now Hatred, and now Scorn.  
" Stricken, my kind have preyed upon, or shunned me !  
" Memory, with me, is like a poison-spring,  
" Bubbling up ever. Harken but to this,  
" My mother's story :  
    " After many days  
" Of struggle, anguish, danger, sweetly borne,  
" She gave me birth. 'Twas nought to her just then,  
" The babe's deformity. Heart-thanks to heaven  
" Flew up, and quick returned with blessings laden,  
" For her own darling's head. While thus she lay,  
" In the deep holy calm, the happy lull,  
" The ineffable relief from o'erwrought pain  
" That mothers only know, my father came ;  
" And then she smiled, as mothers only smile  
" Who wait to see the father greet a son

" And first-born. Oh, my God! Ask not what words  
 " Brake from him seeing me. Enough, enough!  
 " The smile was quenched for ever; and ere long  
 " The tender life died too.  
 " Well, years passed on: and then, at last, there came,  
 " I scarce know how, a brightness round my path;  
 " Familiar pleasant faces drew me forth;  
 " A thousand little cares employed my time;  
 " I had no leisure for my 'customed moods;  
 " All things grew beautiful;—yes, smile; I loved!

LANEHAM.

" And art beloved, if but thy mistress know thee,—  
 " As by and by she will, if ignorant know.

FRANKLYN.

" There is my hope, my strength. Yes, woman's eye  
 " Oft plays the traitor, and will ope the door  
 " Of her heart's outwork—Fancy—unto Love;  
 " But there the conqueror's stayed, to parley now  
 " With her cool judgment, would he win the fort,  
 " How oft to find Contempt keep close the gates:  
 " I do not think but Margaret will love me."  
 Come, let me look again. 'LOVE'S MARTYRDOM,'  
 Thou call'st it; nay, friend, write 'The Braggart's Shame.'  
 But thou art pained; well, then, 'The Painter's Triumph';  
 For, by my soul, it is Art's masterpiece!  
 My double there's a poem in himself,  
 With his dark face, so haggard and forlorn,  
 Through which there shines a wild unearthly light;  
 Light from the fire of the heart's sacrifice.  
 " Have I not somewhere seen —? Oh, now I know:  
 " When but a boy I saw a martyr burned,

"Up in the Castle-yard: I stood close by;  
 "And just as o'er his head the great flames met,  
 "There came a wind, and blew them quite aside;  
 "I saw his face as plain as I see yours:  
 "'Twas deadly white; but as I looked, there gleamed  
 "A sudden something over it, like this:  
 "One cried out from the crowd, 'God smiles on him!'"

LANEHAM.

The picture pleases thee? "The anxious nights,  
 "When, waking with a start, beholding this,  
 "I have been sick of life,—my skill a doubt,  
 "My hope a fantasy, my heart a prey  
 "To that worst vulture, ravenous despair.  
 "Oh, I am now repaid! Thou likest it?"

FRANKLYN.

Whose face is this thou'st given to Margaret's maid?  
 Why, I should know it; yet methinks 'tis one  
 Seen long ago. How very sweet it is!  
 What a full trustingness of soul speaks out!  
 And though less fair than Margaret's, something has  
 That might be liked as well. Why, 'tis thy sister!  
 Thy cheek is flushed—thou'rt troubled—speak, what ails  
 thee?  
 She is not ill?—not dead?

LANEHAM.

No: would she were!  
 My honour's shamed for ever. Oh, my tongue  
 Refuses utterance to the damning truth;  
 Thou guessest it!—Spare, spare me one word more!

FRANKLYN.

Great God! Of comfort little can I give:

Time and thy steady soul will prove best friends.  
 "Hush! One word more;  
 "And if it pain thee now, 'twill please hereafter.  
 "Thy sister will repent; say not in vain.  
 "She 's young;—why, scarce seventeen; and had, perhaps,  
 "Temptations we ne'er dream of. When the fiend  
 "Comes in his angel guise to hearts so young,  
 "Their very innocence may lead astray,  
 "Too simple for distrust, for prudence far too fond.

LANEHAM.

"Could I dream this? Why, Franklyn, she has been  
 "My joy, my pride, my home, my kindred—all!  
 "I taught her mine own art, even as I learned it;  
 "Pleased with her growing promise, and my eyes  
 "On her sweet face delighted still to rest,  
 "And sought no other; and" she has deceived me;  
 Left me! Oh, villain, villain! Would I knew—

*Enter* SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Your brother and his friend await your leisure.

LANEHAM (*dropping the curtain over the picture, and fastening it*).  
 Farewell!

FRANKLYN.

Keep this awhile for me.

LANEHAM.

I understand.

FRANKLYN.

"You'll come again to-morrow? Yes; enough."

[*Exit* LANEHAM followed by SERVANT with the picture, on one side; on the other, enter CLARENCE and FREELOVE.

FREELove (*aside to CLARENCE*).

Was that her brother?

CLARENCE (*aside to FREELove*).

Yes, be careful—hush!

FRANKLYN.

Ha, Clarence! [*They embrace.*] Sir, I am glad to see you.

Proud

To welcome to my house my brother's friend.

FREELove.

All my ambition's uttered in those words,  
 And in the hope he taught me first to feel,  
 Desert might win your favour. "You would smile  
 "To see and hear us, as the nights draw on—  
 "Our books laid by, for pleasant fire-light chat,—  
 "Sit o'er the hearth, and still discourse of you.  
 "Our college-bell has often made me run  
 "To my own room, I dare not say how late."

FRANKLYN.

My heart leaps up to bid you welcome both!  
 "This house, sir, make your home the while you stay;  
 "And let that be until—I bid you go.  
 "Brother, on Saturday my bride comes home.  
 "Thou dost remember Margaret? [*To Freelove.*] This rogue  
 "Was once my rival in our boyish love.  
 "Horribly jealous too was I the while.  
 "I almost think we fought."  
 [*To CLARENCE.*] Come, just five minutes intercourse apart,  
 Then all to Margaret. [*Exeunt FRANKLYN and CLARENCE.*]

FREELove.

Ha! to Margaret! good!

I'm told her spirit's high, impetuous, proud,  
 Though sweet and loving, innocent and free :  
 One who will feel it death the being doubted.  
 Shall Franklyn not doubt? [*Looking at the locket.*] This  
 must answer me.

I'll drop it in his path before he sees her.

[*Re-enter SERVANT with COUNTRYMAN.*]

SERVANT (*looking round*).

Gone! Master Clarence gone? Stay here; I'll find him.  
 [*Exit.*]

FREELOVE (*examining the COUNTRYMAN curiously*).

I am his friend; what want you?

COUNTRYMAN.

Sir, this letter.

[*Showing one.*]

FREELOVE (*aside*).

My quickening pulses tell me it is Julia's  
 Before I see the writing. [*Takes it.*] It is hers!  
 [*To him.*] You brought this from—

COUNTRYMAN.

A lady.

FREELOVE.

Lady, eh?

COUNTRYMAN.

Ay, and a pretty one, although her eyes  
 Looked sore with weeping.

FREELOVE.

And her dress—she was—



COUNTRYMAN.

All muffled up for travelling.

FREELOVE.

And where—

Speak quickly—was she going?

COUNTRYMAN.

To some brother,

As I believe.

FREELOVE (*aside*).

Ha! Julia coming here!

Perhaps is here already! [*To him.*] Friend, take this.

[*Gives money.*]

Your letter I'll deliver. So, farewell.

[*Exit* COUNTRYMAN.]

What! she leaves Clarence! If he learn that now  
He'll fly to seek her; all his waning love  
Will spring anew; he may even marry her;  
And she is lost! But seeing Margaret first,  
What may not happen? *That* shall be secured.

[*Conceals the letter, as re-enter FRANKLYN and  
CLARENCE.*]

CLARENCE.

Some one for me?

FREELOVE (*with a significant look towards FRANKLYN*).

Nothing of moment now.

[*He then walks about, away from CLARENCE, as  
interested in the pictures, &c.*]

FRANKLYN.

Now, then, for Margaret's house. Go on; I follow.

[*Exit CLARENCE, followed by FREELOVE, who ~~alone~~*]

*the locket on the ground (unnoticed by the others)  
with the spring open, directly in FRANKLYN'S path.*

Love will not forth in words, so I have written;  
Beneath these jewels shall she find this paper.

*[Putting it into the casket.*

I'll leave her while she reads it; then return:  
And then,—fond dreams away! I dare not trust ye!  
Befriend me, my poor verses! Stir her heart;  
Bring to her eye that glance which never came,  
But which once there, should never go away.  
Muse, wake my statue to the life of love!

*[Going, sees the locket.*

What's here? A locket, with initial names!  
Ha! C. and M., and worked in diverse hair.  
My God! It is her hair and his entwined!  
'Tis their initials,—Clarence! Margaret! Hark!  
Yes; he returns,—has missed it.

*[Shuts the spring, and replaces it on the ground.*

He shall not know I saw it. *[Retires, watching.*

*Re-enter FREELOVE.*

FREELOVE (*speaking low*).

Yes, 'tis moved:

He's seen it; handled it; the spring is shut:  
But why replace it? Waits he near to learn  
More surely who's the owner? [*Aloud.*] Ha! here 'tis!  
I'm glad for Clarence' sake. He would have grieved!  
I wonder what's within that he should prize it  
So very dearly! *[Exit with the locket.*

FRANKLYN (*advances*).

Can evil fancies charm, like serpent's looks,  
the mere force of gazing? Twice to-day

I've had strange instincts of some fearful thing  
Fastening upon my eye, which—shaken off—  
Returneth now a third time,—as to conquer.  
How my brain beats! I would I were but calm.  
It *was* her hair and his! Their names entwined!  
'Twas dropped by him! He's troubled at its loss!  
'Farewell!' it said; with 'C.' and 'M.'—no more.  
Those twining, linking letters drive me mad!  
Their tangling net seems some vast spider-web  
Outstretching space to snare me; while *he* lurks—  
The Evil One—to leap out on my soul. [Looks off.  
They beckon me. She waits. What shall I do?  
Show it her? What! and meet her questioning glance;  
See her hot colour mount as she fast reads  
The hideous meaning of my tell-tale face.  
Oh, no, I dare not doubt her. Yet would rest.  
After long absence Clarence meets her now:  
If they have loved, although unconsciously,  
My eyes shall surely, watching, see the truth:  
I'll leave all to that test. [Exit.

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

SCENE I. *Room in MARGARET'S house, opening at the back into a garden, with terrace, statues, &c. MARGARET and HESTER discovered, working embroidery.*

MARGARET.

But, my dear Hester, I should ne'er have done,  
Were I to tell you all his generous deeds:  
Scarce a day passes but some new surprise.

HESTER.

And what of *him* ?

MARGARET (*quickly*).

You mean his person ?

HESTER.

No;

That were the last thing I should care to know.

MARGARET.

Or, knowing, I to care for. But the world  
Sees *that*, not *him*. And what then does it see ?  
A stately figure prematurely bent.

HESTER.

And of his mind ?

MARGARET.

Too high for me to

D

That were a task for one of his own powers.  
Don't smile now, Hester; he has made me think.

HESTER.

A rare magician, truly. 'Twere worth while  
To know his charm.—Has really made you think!

MARGARET.

Yet never maiden had a stranger teacher;  
Few scholars so fair a school. In our walks  
A weed attracts my eye, 'tis pulled; and, lo!  
Some wonder in its structure I ne'er knew of  
Makes me forget 'tis but a silly weed.  
The old familiar faces in the town  
Grow new again at some chance word of his,  
Thrown like a torch into their being's depths:  
He makes sad havoc with my loves and hates.

HESTER.

You interest me much. No need to ask  
If my fair cousin has an ardent lover?

MARGARET (*embarrassed*).

How can I answer? He has said so little,  
And that so strangely. I am oft oppressed  
With the thick atmosphere he casts round love,  
As 'twere a plant that throve best in the gloom  
Of tropic jungles; give me English air.

HESTER.

Sensitive natures show fantastic still,  
Keeping so much unshown. They are fine fruits,  
That ripen only in a kindly sun.  
Is it not so with him?

MARGARET.

It may be.

HESTER.

Or

Nothing should make you wed him.

MARGARET.

Make me ! make me !

Instead of half, were all my fortune bound,  
I'd come a beggar to my own house gates ;  
Nay, cry to him for alms, e'er that should be !  
But no, such fancies wrong his nobleness ;  
He leaves me free as air.

HESTER.

Come, you do love him ?

MARGARET.

Well, I suppose I do. I might be sure,  
But that I eat and drink and sleep so well ;  
And feel so little of those wondrous things  
That night or day we maidens still will dream of.  
Heigho ! 'tis the common fate, sweet coz,  
Which, at the worst, I but anticipate :  
When Hymen takes possession of the house,  
He clips Love's wings, stops all his wild vagaries ;  
In short, so tames him, that stay he or go,  
It troubles not the comfortable god.

“ [*Turns over a portfolio lying on the table.*

“ What think you of my recent drawings, Hester ?

“ See—flowers, and fruits, and men, and birds, and beasts.

“ You can't desire a more impartial taste.

HESTER (*taking up a drawing*).

“ And is this yours ?

MARGARET (*laughing*).

“ I cannot say it is.

“ Such novel structures, and such rainbow hues,  
“ Reflect more daring artists. It was given  
“ To me some years since by a youthful friend,  
“ The younger Franklyn, who is now at college :  
“ A mirthful record of a mirthful freak.  
“ You know our country custom, on the morn  
“ Of fair St. Valentine, who bids us take  
“ The youth on whom our earliest glance may fall.  
“ Franklyn and I, upon St. Valentine's eve,  
“ Had privily fixed a signal. Master Clarence  
“ O'erhears us ; comes to me e'er break of day,  
“ Acts to the letter as we had arranged,  
“ Unwitting me looks forth, and so am caught.  
“ ‘ Ho ! ho ! good morrow to my Valentine !’  
“ Came ringing upwards through the frosty air ;  
“ And I, though vexed, was fain to laugh right out,  
“ In very sympathy with the rogue's own mirth :  
“ Franklyn scarce spoke to us for a fortnight after.”

*Enter ALICE.*

ALICE.

Here 's Master Franklyn, madam, and his brother.

*Enter FRANKLYN, CLARENCE, and FREELOVE.*

[*Exit ALICE.*

FRANKLYN.

I bring unbidden friends.

MARGARET.

But not unwelcome.

[*To CLARENCE.*] It is your brother's custom to surprise  
With unexpected pleasures. Need I say  
How glad I am to see you home once more?

[*CLARENCE kisses her hand.*]

FRANKLYN (*aside*).

How her eyes sparkle as she looks on him!  
But that's their native brightness.

MARGARET (*to FREELove*).

Welcome, sir!

FRANKLYN "*(taking MARGARET to the front, draws the miniature  
from his breast)*."

"How shall I thank you for this precious gift?  
"The words still fail me at my utmost need:  
"A thousand passionate thoughts are in my heart,  
"And thronging to my lips, yet I am mute.

MARGARET.

"Do I deserve your thanks? This is no gift;  
"I looked for its precise equivalent.

FRANKLYN.

"I dare not understand you as I would,  
"Although this foolish kindling of my cheek  
"Shows vanity a quick interpreter.  
"What have I said? God help me! am I vain?  
"Nay then, your mirror.

MARGARET.

"What wild words are these?"





Are still remembered ; though how found again,  
Unless you had a guide, I marvel much.

CLARENCE.

Your raillery is just, though scarcely kind,  
To one who's ne'er been from that home in spirit.

FREELOVE.

Oho ! Confession ! Home-sick. This explains  
What made him seem so absent oft at college.  
I saw him once walk straight into a well,  
His eyes, I do believe, the whole time on it. [*They laugh.*]

MARGARET.

But that you know might be a student's zeal,  
Anxious to learn in which well Truth lies hid. [*They laugh.*]

FREELOVE.

“ Then he 's the choicest company. No lewd wit,  
“ No violent disputations doth he favour.  
“ Address you him, he hears and meditates,  
“ And by the time you have yourself forgot  
“ Alike the word and thought, asks ‘ What was that ?’  
“ Addresses he you, some sighing ‘ Ah’ or ‘ Oh’  
“ Brings in the solemn query, ‘ What 's o'clock ?’  
“ And thus alone one knows him from one's shadow.

MARGARET.

“ You 're a sad libeller, I fear.

FREELOVE.

“ Nay, madam, nay.  
“ He owns that the best part of him was here,  
“ The rest we had at college.”

MARGARET (*to CLARENCE*).

May I hope  
Your studies have progressed as you could wish?

CLARENCE (*embarrassed*).

Why—yes—that is—[*looking towards FREELOVE*—I think  
I may say—yes!

FREELOVE (*imitating his manner*).

Why—yes—that is—I think you may say—yes;  
And yet 'tis hard to serve two mistresses.

MARGARET (*to CLARENCE*).

You'll scarcely now remember the old scenes  
Where Franklyn, you, and I still roamed together,  
When the first violet, first branch of May,  
First blushing rose-bud, or last blackberry,  
Was dearer held than all the summer's pomp.

CLARENCE.

What does the heart forget?

MARGARET.

The heart! the heart!  
Oh, some fresh word your books of science teach;  
What hearts may do I know not, but if yours  
Should e'er be treacherous—these drawings here,  
Most gay ones, I assure you, will refresh it.

CLARENCE (*rising to look at them, comes close to her*).

What, my own drawings, that I gave you when—

[MARGARET *smiles*.

And you so long have kept them.

MARGARET.

Long! so long!

Sir Modesty! Why, would you have me throw  
My Valentine's kind gifts into the fire?

FREELOVE.

And Sir Pretence too! As if *he* would do it!  
I caught a glimpse to-day of an old token  
He's kept as long, I fancy. Show it, Clarence.

CLARENCE.

Some other time.

FREELOVE.

Ha! ha! You see he blushes

To be so caught.

CLARENCE.

'Tis this he means.

[*Handing the locket to MARGARET.*]

MARGARET.

My locket!

After so many years again before me.  
[*Aside.*] How often did I wish to get this back,  
And then tell Franklyn of my girlish folly.  
He'd smile.

FREELOVE (*to CLARENCE*).

How rapt she seems while gazing on't!

MARGARET (*aside*).

I'll get it back, but must not make it serious.  
[*To CLARENCE.*] What thoughts this brings! Ah, 'twas a  
foolish time!

CLARENCE.

A very sweet one.

MARGARET.

Will you give me this?

CLARENCE (*pointing to the drawings*).

And I burn these? What daubs! Come, let me burn them.

MARGARET (*laughing*).

Indeed you shall not; 'twere a loss to art!

CLARENCE.

Nay, then, I will! So there's the locket, first.

[*He throws the ribbon over her neck.*]

FREELOVE (*aside*).

By all my hopes of mischief, Franklyn comes!

[*To HESTER.*] You're fond of flowers, then? There's a very rare one

Upon the terrace I would like to show you.

[*Goes off with HESTER at the back.*]

CLARENCE.

I'll have them!

MARGARET.

No!

[*During the slight and playful struggle that ensues, re-enter FRANKLYN unobserved.*]

FRANKLYN (*aside*).

Alone—together—thus!

CLARENCE.

If I use force, 'tis you who tempt me to it.

FRANKLYN (*aside*).

My verses on the ground, trod underfoot!

His locket on her neck! So! 'twas for her.

MARGARET.

I yield then.

FRANKLYN (*aloud*).

Ha!

[*They turn, and seeing his look and gesture, pause, and appear embarrassed.*]

*Re-enter* FREELOVE and HESTER.

Suddenly silent? Pause ye? Nay, go on.

CLARENCE.

We were but—

FRANKLYN.

Well?

MARGARET.

These drawings, Franklyn, here—

FRANKLYN (*significantly*).

I know them! Yes, and this too!

[*Taking hold of the locket.*]

Who gave it? Speak!

What! You're confused! Your colour changes. Margaret!

MARGARET (*passionately*).

When innocence can stoop to feel like guilt,  
 What wonder if to all it look like guilt!  
 Had I not most unjustly judged myself,  
 You had not dared to judge me. Know me better,  
 Or know this house no more.

FRANKLYN.

And I—but no.

I dare not trust my heart unto my lips,  
 And so—farewell!

CLARENCE.

Unfortunate! Forgive  
The thoughtless folly that has caused all this.

MARGARET.

Nay, think not of it.

CLARENCE.

I will follow him.  
It is my duty to explain the whole. [Exit.

FREELOVE (*aside*).

One blow struck gloriously! Another such, and—  
[Meets MARGARET's eye; bows with an air of deep  
respect and sorrow, and exit.

MARGARET (*sitting down, lays her hand upon the casket*).

This must be returned! [Hastily rings a bell.

Enter SERVANT.

Send Alice to me. [Exit SERVANT.

HESTER (*sees and takes up the paper that fell from the casket*).

A paper! Verses! Cousin, may I read them?

[MARGARET makes no answer, and HESTER reads.

What say they, Love is blind, my sweet?

He taught me first to see

The very flowers beneath my feet.

They were but flowers to me,

Till Love informed them with thy grace,

Thy beauty and thy bloom.

Ah, now in all 'tis thee I trace,

Thy breath in their perfume.

May I continue?

*Enter ALICE.*

ALICE.

Did you call me, madam ?

MARGARET (*irresolutely*).

I did, but am not ready. Do not wait. [*Exit ALICE.*]

HESTER.

May I continue ?

MARGARET.

If you wish, you may.

HESTER (*reads*).

What have I proved ? Love is not blind !  
 Then must I wish he were ;  
 How else may *I* thy favour find ?  
 Oh, bid him, mistress dear,  
 O'erlook the casket for the gem :  
 Nay, think how far above  
 A monarch's costliest diadem  
 The humblest heart may prove.

Shall I call Alice ?

MARGARET.

Come, come, read the whole.

HESTER (*reads*).

Yet count not my demerits o'er,  
 Unless indeed to show  
 What depths unfathomèd before  
 Love's bounty loves to know ;  
 How worth may worthlessness redeem,  
 Beauty itself reflect  
 Across the duskiest brow its gleam,  
 And love its own aspect.



MARGARET (*after a pause*).

Well, cousin Hester ; well, what think you now ?

HESTER.

How sweet the olive-branch to the tempest-tossed !

MARGARET.

But could he doubt me ?

HESTER.

Rather doubts himself!—

His person,—and grows morbid thinking on't ;  
Angry and jealous, yet scarce knowing why.  
He'll outlive this, be sure.

MARGARET.

Well, cousin, come ; we'll try your olive-branch. [*Exeunt.*]

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## SCENE II.

*The High Street, with an ancient inn on the right, and an embattled gateway ; the Stone Bow across the street toward the back.*

*Enter CLARENCE and FREELOVE meeting.*

FREELOVE.

Now, is this lordly brother yet appeased ?

CLARENCE.

Moody and silent hearkened he my words,  
And then, as silent, left me.

FREELOVE.

“Come, my friend,  
“Take no advantage of a frank confession,  
“I own myself a fool.

CLARENCE.

“And why, I pray thee?”

FREELOVE.

One hour ago your brother seemed to be  
So rich in Fortune's gifts, 'twere hard to tell  
How the blind goddess could enhance his store.  
And now!—would we were back among our books;  
One's head grows dizzy on such shifting sands.

CLARENCE.

Why, so it seems, when lovers' quarrels grow  
Into a thing portentous in your eyes.

FREELOVE.

“Assure me 'tis no more, and I will say  
“I was a fool to call myself a fool.  
“You know me apter still to laugh than weep;  
“Heedless of others' woes as of my own.  
“Yet such assurance will be a relief.

CLARENCE.

“Why should you doubt it?”

FREELOVE.

“Speak, and I will not.”  
Do you think this but a passing lover's cloud,  
A thing of dropping tears and rainbow smiles,  
So sweet i' the end they scarce mourn the beginning?  
Have you no fear of mightier storms to come?

CLARENCE.

None [*hesitates*] that their love, at least, may not pass through.

FREELove.

Ay, if they *do* love.

CLARENCE.

Whither tends this talk?  
We wish them well; leave all the rest to heaven.

FREELove.

Right! right! You comfort me! My friend is safe.

CLARENCE (*with agitation*).

You do not mean that I have—

FREELove.

Loved this lady?

In aught that maketh love dishonour—No.  
But we have eyes and ears, a heart and mind,  
Framed for the worship of all beauteous things,  
Or why was beauty made? 'Tis Nature's law.  
Place loveliness before us—and we love.

CLARENCE.

And then?

FREELove.

Then,—are the sport of every breeze.  
Puff! and we're gone, some kinder fate pursuing;  
Or—puff! and instead, we're in the dear one's arms.

CLARENCE.

Suppose I thus loved Margaret?

FREELove.

Saints forbid!

Love is the heart's deep maze, where tangling paths  
 Woo and bewilder, and still draw us on  
 Towards the high-raised temple of fruition ;  
 Which few of us may reach, and yet from which  
 The eye and step infatuate cannot turn.  
 'Tis well that you can jest on't ; but keep out !  
 Were *you* once in, to pause or to return  
 Were each alike impossible.

CLARENCE.

Indeed !

Your riddles are too hard for my weak brain.  
 Why should I not return, if honour bade ?

FREELOVE.

“ Were you a vain man, I might please you now ;  
 “ Were you a lover, steep your heart in sunshine,  
 “ Even though the tracking shadow were despair :  
 “ But you are neither, or my tongue were sealed.  
 “ Hear, then, what I, a looker-on, believe :”

If there be truth in force of early ties,  
 Made when the soul still hovers on the lip ;  
 Truth in young Love's proverbial waywardness,  
 Whose idlest fancy you may make deep passion  
 By opposition's magic ; truth in the glow  
 O'erspreading the fair cheek that welcomed you  
 After long absence ; truth in the delight  
 That called up memories—tokens—of your past :  
 Nay, more, if there be truth in harmony  
 Of person, age, and temper ; truth, in fine,  
 In all the elements that we believe  
 Make happy unions ;—then 'tis no less true  
 That you are loved by Margaret ! Nay, why start you ?  
 not adders' stings.

CLARENCE.

Hold! Are you mad?

It is not—cannot be! And if it were,  
No tongue should dare to breathe such desperate words.  
Alas, why came I!

FREELove.

You could not foresee it.

Be still! Your heart untouched, your conscience clear,  
You have but, as you say, to wish them well,  
And leave the rest to heaven.

CLARENCE.

Most wise friend!

“Which shall I honour most—your skill to cure,  
“Or skill in the discovery of disease?”  
Since nought will tell you how my heart is touched  
But my own words—hear me with shame confess  
I *do* love Margaret.

FREELove.

Is it possible!

CLARENCE.

Your cure?

FREELove.

I'm dumb!

CLARENCE.

And I can only act.

And act may fail me if I pause to think.  
Have forth our horses. Fly at once! Each hour's  
Delay may prove a lifetime of dishonour.

FREELove.

“Few the heroic men that Nature makes;

“ And you are of them. You'll outlive this blow.”  
Alas, poor Margaret!

CLARENCE.

Think you she will suffer?

FREELOVE.

“ 'Tis not the simple sacrifice she makes  
“ Of a great love unto a greater duty;  
“ Which, made but once, is often made for ever,  
“ And leaves the heart at least a hope for peace;—  
“ She *may* do that; she *will*, inspired by you.  
“ But then”—Nay, let us go. Her fate is fixed.  
We but unman ourselves by thinking on't.

CLARENCE.

Your fear—what is it?

FREELOVE.

To make her life a lie.  
And of all lies, oh, heaven! the wedded lie.  
Come, will you write, and tell her why you go?

CLARENCE.

What! own I love her?

FREELOVE.

Yes; 'twill strengthen her.  
You love, and you renounce. She does the same.

CLARENCE.

Perhaps you're right.

FREELOVE.

Then do it, quick! Take this.

[*Giving a note-book.*

I'll fetch a silken cover from the inn.

[*Exit.*

CLARENCE (*writes, then pauses*)

He should judge truly! yet—[*so*

*Re-enter* FREELOVE.

FREELOVE.

Done?

CLARENCE.

Yes. [*Gives it to* FREELOVE, *who folds it up.*]

FREELOVE.

Address it.

CLARENCE.

Are you sure 'tis right?

FREELOVE.

Far too heroically right for me  
To imitate. [*Reads.*] 'To the fair Margaret—these.'  
How fortunate! here comes her maid.

CLARENCE.

Will you

Then speak to her? I cannot.

[*Retires.*]

*Enter* ALICE.

FREELOVE.

Pretty one!

Few mistresses could bear without a pang  
To see this grace and beauty by their side.

ALICE (*coldly*).

Can you direct me, sir, to Master Franklyn?  
He's not at home.

FREELOVE.

I have not seen him. Alice,  
I guess your business. How I feel with you,  
This letter for your mistress best may tell.  
My friend goes back to-day. You understand?

ALICE (*taking the letter*).

Ah, yes! ah, that is noble!

FREELOVE.

Knew you all,

You'd say so.

ALICE.

As I feared!

FREELOVE.

But stay, come here.

Beauty like yours—

ALICE.

I wish you, sir, good day. [*Exit.*]

FREELOVE (*taking JULIA'S letter from his pocket, and looking at it*).

Now for my harder task.

*Re-enter* CLARENCE.

CLARENCE.

My letter gone?

FREELOVE.

It has. Oh, I forgot; a countryman  
Brought this for you. Not knowing what it meant,  
Or whence it came, I thought it better given  
Out of your brother's presence. [*Gives the letter.*]

CLARENCE (*in great agitation*).

It is Julia's!

I cannot, dare not read it now. Read you.

Alas, poor girl, I did not mean to wrong thee!

FREELOVE (*turning away his face from CLARENCE, reads*).

'If the music of your words be as sweet as ever to my ear,  
they can no longer lull my conscience to sleep. I leave you to



seek forgiveness at the feet of my brother. There, if your heart  
seek me, you may find JULIA.'

Or, in plain English, come and marry me !  
Well, well, it must be owned things do fall pat  
Just now for such an end. Your brother here :  
Her brother—you—and last, herself doth come,—  
Almost outstripping even her own farewell.  
The balm prepared before the wound was given.  
Well, marry. Seek her brother. Tell him all  
The moving story. He'll be sure relent.  
His drooping honour mount quite strong again  
When bridal tears drop dew. Besides, you must !

CLARENCE.

Must !

FREELOVE.

Yes ; if she tell Laneham, he'll tell Franklyn.  
I fear, if you lose time, you'll hardly have  
The grace of asking that which you must take.

CLARENCE.

Must I ! Not quite so weak as that. Oh, no !  
But can I leave appeal like this unanswered ?  
" She loves me, I am sure. I thought this morn  
" My love for her as certain. May I not,  
" Even now, be wandering through some spirit-mist ?  
" It seems like glamour all this day's strange work."  
Oh no, I will go to her.

FREELOVE.

Very well.

But going answers this. When next she sees you,  
She sees her husband. Oh, you could not go  
With any other thought.

CLARENCE.

Yes; that is true.

FREELOVE.

Well, marry her! Yet stay; were that quite right  
Even to Julia, since you love another?

CLARENCE.

No, no!

FREELOVE.

Then what would Margaret think to hear it,  
Just after?—ah, your colour mounts; you feel  
My meaning.

CLARENCE.

Yes! oh, yes! I will not go.  
At least, not yet. Will you?

FREELOVE.

What could I say?

CLARENCE.

Speak of my brother's anger—not the cause!  
I could not at such time tell him of her;  
And yet he first must know. And so, meantime,  
We both return to college. [Going.

FREELOVE.

Nestor's self

Could not improve on that. I'll do my best.

[Exit CLARENCE.

Going not now, oh, never will he go!  
Coming not now, never will she again  
Receive him, or I do mistake her much.  
But hush! no joy, no exultation yet.

[Exit.

## SCENE III.

LANEHAM'S studio, in part arranged for art-labours at the back, where the light falls upon a picture on an easel, with busts, statues, bas-reliefs, &c. around; and in part, in front, as a domestic apartment, with harp, vases, &c.

*Enter JULIA, in clothes travel-worn, supported by BERTHA, who kisses and comforts her.*

JULIA.

Dear, dear, dear nurse!

BERTHA.

Ah, my own little flower—

So I did use to call you,—had you stayed  
Much longer, you had other flowers found  
Growing about me, in my last earth-bed.

JULIA.

I am here now. [*Starts.*] Hark! was not that his step?

BERTHA (*listening*).

No.

JULIA.

How is he?

BERTHA.

Well.

JULIA.

Not much changed? Oh, Bertha,

How can I meet him?

BERTHA.

Calm thee, darling, do.  
He will forgive, even if harsh at first.

JULIA.

“Oh, I have trained my soul these last few days  
“To every form of pain. I may bear that.”  
His kindness 'tis I dread. All here's so cold,  
I hang to life but like an icicle  
That the first rush of sunshine must destroy. [Starts.  
It was his step! Conceal me, Bertha, quick!

[*They retire on the one side; enter on the other*  
LANEHAM. *He throws himself into an arm-  
chair, pressing his hands upon his eyes.*

LANEHAM.

Would I could shut out life just like this light,  
Heartsick of both! [BERTHA advances. *He looks up.*  
Ha, Bertha, is it you?

BERTHA (*advancing*).

What aileth thee?

LANEHAM.

I dreamt of her last night.

BERTHA.

Wilt thou tell me thy dream?

LANEHAM.

I know not what  
Strange power had touched my eyes, but I beheld  
A scene so ravishing in loveliness  
That my soul grew into it, and had no life  
But as that lived. Never before saw I

Heaven so revealed above. And yet below,  
In still diviner hues 'twas all reflected  
Down in a lake's clear bosom. Trees, flowers, clouds—  
Great snowy mountain-clouds—each more and more  
Remote, like mighty angel-steps, up-reaching  
E'en from the world to God. Yea, life itself,  
No more half earthly, half ethereal, seemed  
All perfect, rounded, and enclosed, within  
That double heaven.

While thus I gazed, on knotted tree-root sitting,  
There came a poor tired wayfarer in rags,  
And sate down by my side. My sister 'twas!  
I knew it, though her face was turned from me.  
Then she, like me, gazed down—long down—still down,—  
Drawn as by a golden cord unto that heaven  
Below that wooed her from beneath the waves.  
At last a sigh upheaved her shivering frame.  
Oh, what life-burdens of misery and sin  
Uprose and fell again with that poor sigh,—  
But fell not off! And then she murmured low:  
' Ah, to be pure again like this—and die!  
And yet again, ' O, Maker of all this,  
I could not rise into Thy heaven! Oh, now  
May I not fall to it and Thee—thus—thus!  
Then, like a wasted fruit from life's tree dropping,  
She fell into the lake! O God, what ailed me!  
I saw her fall, yet could not save—not stir;  
Blood, motion, will, all paralysed, congealed;—  
Nought left me but the power to see and suffer.  
Shudderingly backwards drew the waves; then flew  
In crowds tumultuously unto the shore,  
As 'twere to cry for help, but there sank mute,  
Tongueless with horror! And the waters then,

In quivering pity, drew the veil o'er all—  
And she was gone. My sister! sister! sister!

[BERTHA leads JULIA forwards—she sobs.  
That voice! 'Twas hers!

JULIA (*tottering forwards, falls at his feet, and clasps his knees*).

My brother!

LANEHAM (*is overcome for the moment, then draws himself up,  
and speaks sternly*).

Nay, unclasp me!

Here, Bertha, make her rise.

BERTHA.

Obey him, child.

[JULIA stands up rigidly erect, but with face averted.

LANEHAM.

You here again?

JULIA.

I know I am not worthy.

LANEHAM.

Your lover tired, you come. Is that the story?

JULIA (*speaking with difficulty*).

I sinned—repented—left him—came to you.

LANEHAM (*turning away*).

Well, that is something—yes. But oh, so weak,  
So falling, who again could trust?

JULIA.

My God!

Yes, brother, you are right.

LANEHAM.

Remember you

The death-bed of our father?

JULIA.

Too—too well!

LANEHAM.

'My boy,' said he, 'look there upon your sister.  
I leave you her and honour; that is all.'  
Did I not cherish both?

JULIA.

You did! And I  
Have thus repaid you in undoing both.  
I think I understand what you would say:  
Forgive me if you can, and then forget.  
I'll pray to heaven to raise some worthier one  
To tend and comfort you. [*Going.*] Farewell! Farewell!

LANEHAM.

Oh, Julia, I can play this part no longer.  
Come back, my sister—to my arms—my heart!  
Oh, my own darling; until now I knew not  
How much I loved thee. Julia! Sister dear!

[*JULIA, after a pause, bursts into hysteric cries and  
laughter, gradually subsiding, as the others  
speak, into sobs and moans.*

LANEHAM (*running to her, and falling at her feet*).

What have I done?

BERTHA.

Ah, 'tis the kind word kills

With such as she.

LANEHAM.

My Julia! Sister sweet!

Cruel I was; but yet I did forgive thee.

Wilt thou do so to me?

[*JULIA kisses him, then drops weeping upon his shoulder.*

JULIA.

Oh, make me not too happy—not just yet.

[BERTHA brings an arm-chair and exit.]

LANEHAM.

Sit, darling, sit. [*She sits.*] Stay! [*Fetches a pillow.*] This behind your head.

[*Fetches a cushion.*] There, there,—your feet on this.  
And now look round.

Gladden the dear old home with mistress-eyes.

Alas, it lacks your tendance. But to-morrow

We'll light it up with flowers. Quite forgiven?

[*She kisses his forehead.*]

How cold you are! how pale! why, those dear eyes  
Can ne'er have slept of late.

JULIA.

I have not been

For many nights in bed. Nay, look not so.

I had no money,—wished to be unknown.

So, when toward eve strength failed me, I have crept

Into some barn or outhouse, and there lay

Until the dawning cried, Go on once more;

And so I crept along.

LANEHAM.

How got you food?

JULIA.

I ate but little.

LANEHAM.

Well—and that?

JULIA.

I found

Many a little kindness on the road.



LANEHAM.

And when that failed—what then?

JULIA.

I could not eat  
At last. Three times since yesternorn I tried  
To enter here, but dared not until now.

[*He hurriedly fetches wine and food.*]

LANEHAM.

Eat, drink, for my sake! Nay, I'll hear no more  
Until—

[*She takes a few morsels.*]

JULIA.

Dear brother, ask not yet *his* name.  
If, as my heart believes, he will be here  
Ere many days—nay, haply hours—are passed,  
To seek forgiveness from you, and to—

LANEHAM.

Here! Here!

He here?

JULIA.

You will forgive him then?

LANEHAM (*after a pause and struggle*).

I will—

For thy dear sake. [*Aside.*] Met we an hour ago,  
One soul at least had gone to bliss or bane!  
[*To her.*] If he come not?

JULIA.

Be patient with me then  
A little while. O'erlook what I may feel.  
And oh, dear brother, trust me if you can.

LANEHAM.

I will ; I do. Now close those weary lids.  
Lean back and sleep. No, no—not one word more.  
Sleep! Sleep! I'll keep all quiet here the while.

*[Comes forward.]*

Nobly she has redeemed herself. Will he come?  
Ah, selfish that I am, I almost wish  
I might say—No! And yet, to seek her thus  
Through me; would it not show a manly love  
I should respect? What tender care she'll need!

*[Steals back to look at her.]*

Oh, innocent at heart; thank God, she sleeps! *[Exit.]*

*Re-enter BERTHA.*

BERTHA.

Asleep! How can I wake her! Yet if *he*  
It is who seeks her—

*JULIA (starts, looks round, and comes forward).*

Bertha, did you speak?

BERTHA.

Were you asleep, my child?

JULIA.

I was; but thought  
Some one did speak of him. My senses grow  
Painfully keen of late.

BERTHA.:

A boy is here,  
Sent by some stranger.

JULIA.

Bertha, it is he!

Thank God! Thank God!

[*Covers her face in deep emotion.*

Now then, where is he? speak!

BERTHA.

Here, in the lane behind the house.

JULIA.

Oh, Bertha,

Mistake not my soul's joy—I am in bliss!  
 I could not tell you falsely,—I do love him!  
 But 'tis not that,—still less that he may come  
 To marry me; it is that my soul's faith  
 Has not been wrecked. “I trusted all to him.  
 “'Twas wrong, I know; but I did trust my all.  
 “Ah, Bertha, he restores all back to me  
 “Doubly enriched with his own love's wealth.”  
 Can my heart help but leap in sudden joy?  
 Keep near me as I go. He may come in.  
 Tell not my brother yet.

BERTHA.

I understand.

You must do that yourself. God bless thee, child!

[*Exeunt.*

#### SCENE IV.

*A country lane. FREELOVE discovered.*

FREELOVE.

She'd best not see me till too late to shun me.

[*Retires behind a tree.*

*Enter JULIA. While she gazes in one direction, FREE-  
LOVE comes close to her from another, then speaks.*

FREELOVE.

Ah, Julia!

JULIA.

Freelove! [*She grasps a tree for support.*]

FREELOVE.

Are you ill? Oh, heaven,

How pale you grow! [*Offers to support her.*]

JULIA (*faintly*).

I warn you—touch me not!

Was 't you that sent for me?

FREELOVE.

It was.

JULIA (*aside*).

Poor fool!

FREELOVE.

Be just to me. What I once said, I said  
And suffered for,—and—Julia—you forgave me.  
'Tis Clarence sends me now.

JULIA.

He—does—not—come?

FREELOVE.

The time's unfavourable. Slight words, it seems,  
Have risen 'twixt the brothers. So that he  
Could not now speak of you to Master Franklyn.

JULIA.

And so—?

FREELove.

Goes back to college.

JULIA (*aside*).

I am here.

He goes to college. Stay! My senses wander!

Let me be calm before this man—his friend.

[*Suddenly.*] Sir—Freelove—know you if my letter reached him?

FREELove (*sadly*).

Ah, yes.

JULIA.

And did he think I might be here?

FREELove.

We so concluded.

JULIA.

Sir, I thank you. So—farewell!

[*Going.*]

FREELove.

Oh, Julia! on my soul, your grief to me  
Is holy as a temple, into which  
I dare not step unless to do some good.  
May I then freely speak to you?

JULIA.

Say on.

FREELove.

Did Master Franklyn know of this affair,  
For your sake, and for that of his best friend,  
Your brother Laneham, he would force you both  
To sudden marriage: ay, in honour would he.

JULIA (*shuddering*).

He'll sooner force me living to my grave.

FREELOVE.

Or should your brother learn 'tis Clarence that—

JULIA.

You'd say they must not know;  
They shall not—not from me. Farewell! Farewell!

[*BERTHA appears at the side. JULIA goes to her, clasps her arm, and says in a suppressed voice, It was not he!*

BERTHA.

But he will come.

JULIA.

Oh, never!

[*Exit with BERTHA. FREELOVE watching her in deep emotion.*

END OF ACT II.

## ACT III.

SCENE I. *The High Street as before.*" *Enter* FREELOVE *from the inn.*

" FREELOVE.

" Clarence grows furious that I still delay him !  
 " I will not go while Fate hangs o'er our heads  
 " Her trembling balance, needing but one leap,  
 " One bold brave leap, to clutch and turn the scale.  
 " [*Looks off.*] So, there comes Franklyn!

[*Going in the opposite direction.*]

" Ah, and this way Alice!

" Clarence's letter, undelivered still,  
 " Is in her hand. Should Franklyn see that now,  
 " He must suspect it! 'Twill fresh mischief make,  
 " Ay, e'en though Margaret's lips be eager-waiting  
 " To greet him with peace-kisses. Oh, 'twill do!  
 " 'Twill do! While I, in my laborious thoughts,  
 " Hoped but for time to make slow siege and sure,  
 " Why here's my mine, and train, and match all ready—  
 " Explosion imminent! Well, let it clear  
 " The path to Julia,—I will ask no more.

" *Exit.*"*Enter* ALICE *with the letter.*

ALICE.

So, Franklyn comes! How pleased he'll be she sent me,  
 And that poor Clarence acts so nobly too!

Ha, what an ugly thought! Have I been tricked?  
 This letter—is it really what he said,  
 A mere farewell,—or downright love-confession?  
 I do not like that man—his friend—that Freelove.  
 Well, Franklyn shall not see it! [*Hides the letter.*]

*Enter* FRANKLYN.

FRANKLYN.

So, met at last!

ALICE.

My lady sends for you.

FRANKLYN.

Dear Alice, pray take this. [*Giving a chain from off his neck.*] I cannot now  
 More worthily express to you my heart.

ALICE.

Forgive my boldness, sir;  
 But I—and—Philip—feel no common—

FRANKLYN.

Philip!

What, is it so? Nay, blush not. More of this  
 Hereafter. Come, come, Alice, rogue, I know  
 You 've yet more happiness in store for me:  
 The letter. Ah, I saw it.

ALICE (*alarmed*).

Saw—the letter?

FRANKLYN.

Why are you startled?

ALICE (*trying to smile*).

Startled! Was I, sir?



FRANKLYN.

Pray recollect yourself. 'Twas mine—the letter?

ALICE.

Oh, no!

FRANKLYN.

Indeed! Then whose?

ALICE (*aside*).

Unfortunate!

[*To him.*] 'Twas from your brother.

FRANKLYN (*agitated*).

And—and—to—?

ALICE.

My mistress.

FRANKLYN (*aside*).

Oh man, poor weathercock! Now straight to bliss,  
Urging with all his strength; and then, next hour  
Or minute, round he swings  
'To the direct opposing compass-point:  
And weal or woe is but a breath of wind.  
So be it, I am human, and obey.

[*To Alice.*] I'll bear myself this letter to your mistress.

[*Asides.*] Again she hesitates! I'm wronged! She knows it!

'Tis palpable! 'Tis gross! [*She gives the letter.*] You  
need not stay. [Exit ALICE.]

'Think they to baffle me? Oh, I will rend  
A pathway through these thickets of the mind,  
And let broad daylight in. I'll be resolved,  
And quickly! Will be taken from this rack,  
Or else cry out to Fate, "Quick, one wrench more!  
Go on, in mercy, till my heart-strings break!" [Exit.]

## SCENE II.

MARGARET'S house, as before.

*Enter* MARGARET.

MARGARET.

He'll surely come ! Oh, yes, and all be well.  
 'Tis a strange gladness now possesses me,  
 To think I sent for him. That face of storm,  
 Although it frightened—wounded—me at first,  
 Now haunts me with dark grandeur. Yes ! 'twere sweet  
 To see it break in countless vivid gleams  
 Of spirit-light, and beauty, and to feel  
 'Twas *I* that—

*Enter* FRANKLYN, with the letter in his hand.

Franklyn !

*[She advances with extended hand. He meets her coldly, kisses her hand, and lets it drop.]*

Was it he whose touch  
 Thus chilled my fingers ! sent the gushing tide  
 Back on my heart, where now it stifles me ?  
 I scarce can breathe ! 'Twas I advanced ; and thus  
 He meets me. Well !

FRANKLYN.

A letter : 'tis for you.

*[She takes, and looks at it.]*

Doubtless you know the writer by the hand ?

MARGARET.

From Clarence?

[*Is about to open it.*]

FRANKLYN.

Stay! at peril of your scorn,  
Let me first own I took it from your maid.

MARGARET (*aside*).

Ha! Does he mean—? Oh, no, he dares not doubt me!  
[*To him.*] You took it from her—why?

FRANKLYN.

She strove to hide it,—  
She grew confused—

MARGARET (*aside*).

What gulf is opening! [*To him.*] Well?

FRANKLYN (*aside*).

Well! I could bear no more these torturing doubts.

MARGARET (*aside*).

It is so—doubts! [*To him.*] Go on.

FRANKLYN.

I took it from her—

MARGARET (*aside*).

Conceals not even from my maid he doubts me!

FRANKLYN.

To bring to you, and be resolved of all.

MARGARET.

And now? [*He is silent.*] What stays your questions?

FRANKLYN.

Sense of shame!

Of all the foul dishonour of my thoughts  
Contrasted with the beauty of your soul!

MARGARET (*aside*).

I must forget the error—so redeemed.  
Hester was right, perhaps: he needs to feel  
His heart might speak more freely unto mine.  
Well, I will try once more.

FRANKLYN.

You do not read the letter.

MARGARET.

Let it wait.

Come, shall we sit or walk?

FRANKLYN (*aside*).

Does she evade me?

[*To her.*] Your letter—why not read it?

MARGARET (*aside, starting*).

Still he doubts me!

I will no more let forth my foolish heart  
To be so stung. 'Tis plain enough: he doubts me!  
This very letter which he brings me proves it.  
He came to hear it—watch me as I read it,—  
And now suspects me that I put it by,  
In hope to please him.

FRANKLYN (*aside*).

Ha! She fears to read

Till I am gone.

MARGARET (*with assumed gaiety*).

You'd like to hear this letter?

FRANKLYN.

Can you so trust me?

MARGARET.

Come, come, ask me not  
To woo you hear it; plainly say.

FRANKLYN.

Then—yes!

MARGARET (*reads*).

'Margaret, I thought my old feelings were dead. Alas! I now find they left their seed behind in my heart's soil. That you have stirred; and lo, they spring up again in more than the old luxuriance. But I know my duty, and do it. God bless you! Farewell!

CLARENCE FRANKLYN.'

'Tis read; and there's your letter. [*Holding it out.*]

FRANKLYN.

Mine!

MARGARET.

Yours, sir!

Whose else but yours? I'm but your drudge—your valet—  
Your secretary,—what you will. You say,  
'Open me this, and read it while I wait!'—  
And I obey. But do not own it mine!  
Sir, take your letter. Answer 't if you will!  
But dare not call it mine! [*Throws it at his feet.*]  
Oh, heaven! this Master Franklyn! in whose soul  
Mine never dared to enter without awe,  
It seemed so high and holy. *This is he!*

FRANKLYN.

You try to anger me. I understand  
Your policy. I must not see my wrong.

MARGARET.

Wrong, sir, what wrong?

FRANKLYN.

This stripling's love for you,—  
Called forth I know not how.

MARGARET.

Beware! Beware!

FRANKLYN.

I know him well: young, thoughtless, erring, weak;  
But still aspiring to the good and pure.  
He has been tempted, or he'd ne'er done this.

MARGARET.

And I the tempter! Well, sir; very well.  
"Tis good! 'Tis glorious! Truth comes out at last!  
"And truth is glorious; ay, as the sun's rich rays,—  
"Whether we gladden in them, or but know  
"That which they are—as I, oh, God, know now!"

FRANKLYN.

Perhaps I erred: but answer, if you can,  
One question.

MARGARET.

No, sir, I will not!

FRANKLYN.

Will not?

MARGARET.

Yes, sir, I said so.

FRANKLYN.

Margaret!

MARGARET.

Franklyn!

FRANKLYN.

Oh,  
You play with wild fire. It will cling and burn,—  
Our very hearts destroy.

MARGARET (*sarcastically*).

If great men will  
Love greatly, women must be content  
To share their desperate joys,—ay, even these  
You bring me.

FRANKLYN (*fiercely clasps her wrist ; she half shrieks, but with  
a strong effort suppresses her emotion*).

Margaret, look into my face.  
Look! Look! What, tears?

MARGARET.

Yes; but of pain, not grief.  
I hate, and I defy you.

FRANKLYN.

Mine you are!  
Flesh of my flesh, soul of my soul,—all mine!  
“Before wide earth and heaven I claim you mine;  
“And will defend my right! Nay; driven hence,  
“I’d plunge with thee to hell ere I would lose thee!”  
Dost hear?

MARGARET.

Ay, and I feel.  
[*Points to her swollen and bleeding wrist, lacerated  
by the pressure of a signet-ring upon FRANK-  
LYN’S hand.*]

FRANKLYN.

Blood! Your—your blood!

MARGARET.

Oh, happily, your ring hurts but the flesh;  
I've heard of rings that cut into the heart.

FRANKLYN.

Oh, Margaret—did I—could I—wound you thus?

*[He kisses the wound passionately in spite of her resistance.]*

Pity me, Margaret! Oh, I need it now!  
This fever in my soul will drive me mad,  
If you—if you—

*[He drops on the ground before her, his face buried in his hands, and with an air of utter abasement. After a pause he looks up.]*

I dare not ask forgiveness.

MARGARET.

We'll talk some other time. I pray you let  
My brain grow quiet.

FRANKLYN (*rising*).

If my heart's best blood  
Could be distilled to drops of healing balm  
For this hour's use—oh, how it should be poured!  
Well, well! Oh, God! thus ends the day my soul  
Looked for—the dawn of my new life of love. *[Exit.]*

MARGARET.

Alone at last. *[Sits at a table and writes.]*

The bond is broken! There!  
That goes to him. Now to his brother—this.  
*[Writes again; then rings a bell.]*



*Enter ALICE.*

Take that to Master Franklyn ; then take this  
To Clarence.

ALICE.

Madam, you are ill—unhappy, —  
And through my fault. Oh, do not, I beseech you—

MARGARET.

You, too, then fail me! Go, send some one else.

ALICE.

Forgive me, madam! I obey. [*Takes the letters and exit.*]

MARGARET.

'Tis done!

What shall I think to-morrow? I care not.  
'Tempted,' said he! 'Tis he has tempted me  
To do this thing. Is it done?—past recall?  
Well, 'tis his work; he reaps but as he sows.

[*Scene closes.*]

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SCENE III.

LANEHAM's *studio as before.* LANEHAM and JULIA *dis-*  
*covered standing before the picture referred to in Act I.*

LANEHAM.

The story touches you?

JULIA.

Yes.

LANEHAM.

Was't not noble,  
To offer Margaret and all her wealth  
Unto the younger brother?

JULIA.

Who refused?

LANEHAM.

He did. "Perhaps his heart was pre-engaged,  
"Or thought it was. Youth's fancies come and go  
"As bright and many-coloured in their play—  
"As glorious, and as evanescent too,—  
"As the wave-bubbles in the morning sun."

JULIA.

Was this long since?

LANEHAM.

Scarce three months yet.

JULIA (*aside*).

It was for me, then, that he did refuse her.

*Enter FRANKLYN hurriedly, and at first not seeing JULIA.*

FRANKLYN.

Friend, misery is rude, stands not on form.—

[*Sees JULIA.*] What, Julia! Welcome! Ah, few things  
just now

Could touch my heart with joy; but this must do it.

Julia, your brother calls me friend. Will you

Do so? We've suffered both. Then let that bond

Unite us. Come, your hand in friendly pledge.

[*She extends her hand to him without speaking,  
and with averted gaze. He kisses it with deep  
respect. She retires.*]

LANEHAM.

Thanks, for my sister, thanks! We understand  
Your noble kindness.

FRANKLYN.

Laneham—oh, my friend—  
I have offended Margaret past all hope  
To be forgiven.

LANEHAM.

No!

FRANKLYN.

'Tis so; and she,  
I fear, loves him.

LANEHAM.

Him! who?

FRANKLYN.

My brother.

LANEHAM.

No!

FRANKLYN.

Within this hour I've heard her read a letter  
From this same Clarence!—owning—plain—his love.

LANEHAM.

Villain! The—

[*Checks himself.*]

FRANKLYN.

Pause not! oh, speak out! right out!  
A villain, is he not? and yet my brother!  
Go, seek him! But alone we must not meet.

LANEHAM.

Oh, no!—

FRANKLYN.

Then in your presence be it.

LANEHAM.

Where?

FRANKLYN.

At the monk's house within the next half-hour.

You will not fail?

[*Going.*

LANEHAM.

I will not.

[*Exit FRANKLYN.*

Julia!

*Re-enter JULIA.*

Wilt help me? Quick, I must go forth.

[*She brings his cloak, sword, hat, &c.; while helping him to put them on, they speak.*

Remember you our talk ere he came in?

JULIA.

Ah, yes.

LANEHAM.

The picture, prophet-like, spake true.

JULIA.

You mean—?

LANEHAM.

She loves the younger brother, Clarence.

JULIA.

And he—?

LANEHAM.

Loves *her*.—What ails thee, sister dear?

Thou feel'st this story e'en as 'twere thine own;

But 'tis in truth a sad one.

JULIA.

And you now—?

LANEHAM.

Go to arrange a meeting.

JULIA.

What, to fight?

LANEHAM.

Poor pallid cheek! Poor little coward soul!  
No—no, they fight not. Fear not that. Besides,  
He *will* confront him with me or without me.

JULIA.

Yes, that is true. Quick, go then. Oh, make haste!

LANEHAM (*tenderly caressing her*).

Come, add not others' sorrows to your own;  
Our 'flower' already droops too much. Look up!

JULIA.

I will. I'll try—but haste.

LANEHAM.

Yes; I am gone! [*Exit.*]

JULIA.

[*Calls*] Bertha!

*Enter* BERTHA.

Oh, look not with a blank surprise  
To hear—oh, God, I know now why he came not!—  
Bertha, he loves another—and she him!  
'Tis Margaret!

BERTHA.

What—his brother's bride!

JULIA.

They meet—

The brothers meet—directly. I'll be there.

[BERTHA *shakes her head.*

By all the love that you have ever borne me,—

By all the grief that I have made you feel,

Stop me not now, but help! Oh, trust me, Bertha,

I shall act rightly. Think of some disguise!

[*Looking through the window.*] Ah, Bertha, look!

BERTHA.

It is the poor old nun.

JULIA.

She's dumb?

BERTHA.

Yes, so they say. But others think

She will not speak, nor will she show her face,

In expiation of some fearful crime.

But oh, let danger, sickness, suffering, come

To poor or rich, the virtuous or the bad,

You'll hear her heart speak then, wilt see it smile.

JULIA.

I am about her height?

BERTHA.

Yes.

JULIA.

Then the dress—?

BERTHA.

I've thought of that. There came once to my sister,

At dead of night, a pale, heart-broken thing

Who'd scaled some convent's walls. Her crime she told  
     not,  
 But said the doom was death.

JULIA.

And did she 'scape?

BERTHA.

Yes, by my sister's help, and left behind ·  
 Her dress. 'Tis like yon nun's.

JULIA.

Quick! fetch it then!  
 Oh, heaven, he told me not the place! I may  
 Not find them, or may find too late. Quick, Bertha!

[*Exeunt.*]

#### SCENE IV.

*The Monk's house in ruins.*

*Enter PHILIP and ALICE.*

ALICE.

"You think 'tis here they meet?"

PHILIP.

"He dropped the words  
 "'Monk's house,' and 'Tell my brother,' and there paused;  
 "Then added presently—'No matter now,'  
 "And hurried off. Oh, had you seen his smile,  
 "You'd felt like me a fear still quickening,  
 "Ay, faster than my steps, till I got here.

ALICE.

“ His smile ?

PHILIP.

“ Alice, it curdled all my blood :—

“ Low down, and lurid—such as once I saw  
 “ In flame Earth’s countenance with ghastly light  
 “ Before a storm ; as though unto herself,  
 “ In mocking bitterness, she laughed to think  
 “ How mad the fiends she must let loose to-day.

ALICE.

“ Oh, Philip !

[*Touching his arm instinctively, as if for protection. He winds his arm round her waist.*]

PHILIP.

“ Tremble you? This sympathy

“ With me and with my master’s my sole comfort.  
 “ I would next hour were passed !

ALICE (*gently withdrawing herself*).

“ What can I do ?

PHILIP.

“ Be here. A pure kind woman’s atmosphere  
 “ Will violence stifle, make bad passions crouch  
 “ Low in the dust. The virgin true is she  
 “ Of the old fable, whom no beasts could harm,  
 “ Who looked the hungry lion into awe :  
 “ He stooped to spring—but stayed to lick her feet.”

ALICE.

But will it not seem strange, my presence here ?

PHILIP.

No : meeting me, you learnt they were from home,—



Your letters are important,—so with me  
You came to seek them.

ALICE.

And may thus create  
The very ills we fear. I dread the worst  
From Margaret's manner.

PHILIP.

What else can we do?  
Wait till their swords are out, and then—

ALICE.

Oh, Philip!

PHILIP.

They're coming. Hark!—we'll draw aside, and watch.  
[*They retire.*]

*Enter CLARENCE and FREELOVE.*

CLARENCE.

Words—words! They help not now. Oh! had we gone,—  
And did I not entreat, conjure you to it?—  
This meeting had been spared me. What it means  
I cannot guess. Has Margaret shown my letter?  
Did it offend her? Sends she him to me,  
Burning with sense of his own wrong and hers?  
Or comes he wild with jealousy?  
“How can I meet him? Yet, to play the coward—!  
“Dare I tell him I thought that she did love me?  
“And yet, how else excuse my loving her!  
“Nay, telling her—his bride! Ay, there's the sin.  
“'Tis that dissolves all courage, purpose, will,  
“All self-respect. What if I played the fool  
“In thinking she did love me! Were it so,  
“How hateful I must seem in her pure eyes!”

FREELove.

They're here! Be master of yourself. Wait! watch!  
 Who knows what Margaret may have said or done?  
 Nay, listen to me. If she loves you—acts  
 As love would dictate, trusting in your love,—  
 How deep the shame and wrong were you to fail her!  
 "If she does not love you, then own the truth—  
 "'Twas wrong—you're sorry—and so let us go."

*Enter FRANKLYN and LANEHAM.*

FRANKLYN (*aside*).

He has not 'scaped me!  
 [*To CLARENCE.*] Your mother did not like me much, I  
 think?

CLARENCE.

She was not kind to you.

FRANKLYN.

Since Nature's self  
 Was but a step-mother, why should *she* be more?  
 Dying, she left you upon me dependent.  
 I saw her last looks turn from you to me  
 In sickening fear; and I—I—calmed her fear.

CLARENCE.

And gratefully she thanked you.

FRANKLYN (*coldly interrupting him*).

Have I fulfilled the promises I made?

CLARENCE.

You have.

FRANKLYN.

'Tis well. Another question: as you grew

Toward manhood, you, like me, loved Margaret,—  
 At least, so seemed it. And, at last, even her  
 I offered you. But you refused her. Now, you came  
 To see me wedded?

CLARENCE.

Yes.

FRANKLYN.

Knowing that Margaret was my bride—was mine!  
 Even while you wrote to whisper of your love.

CLARENCE.

I—I—

[*Hesitates*]

FRANKLYN.

Aha! the villain shrinks at last  
 Into his native littleness!  
 "Before you all, and this blue heaven above,  
 "Stands he not there convicted?" Spotted o'er  
 With such foul treachery, it were a grace  
 To free the weary air of his pollution.  
 Brother of mine no more! [*Draws.*] give back to me  
 My bride—my life's one treasure,—only hope!  
 Give back her heart, or thine I will tear forth.

LANEHAM (*interposing*).

Dear friend!

FREELove (*to CLARENCE*).

Quick! draw, if but in self-defence.  
 Your very life's in danger!

CLARENCE.

Well, I care not.

FREELove.

Draw! With your skill you may protect yourself  
 And him too— [*aside*] if you're fool enough to do it.

FRANKLYN.

Wilt give her back to me? Thou'dst better come  
Between the tigress and her ravished cubs  
Than me and her.

LANEHAM (*still keeping him back*).

He may explain to you—

FRANKLYN.

He owns his guilt; why, then, stay punishment?  
[*He forces LANEHAM aside, when enter PHILIP  
followed by ALICE.*  
Philip! you here! Begone!

PHILIP.

I brought *her* maid

With letters.

FRANKLYN.

Give them.

[*ALICE is coming forward, but PHILIP stops her.*

PHILIP.

Stay! My master dear!—

FRANKLYN.

This is no time for talk. The letters—quick!

PHILIP.

Nay, you must hear me.

FRANKLYN.

Must! You! Lackey! Slave!

Again I say, the letters—and begone!

PHILIP.

I will not.

FRANKLYN.

Will not!

PHILIP.

Master, there are times  
 When the free soul of man must plainly say  
 That which it thinks, heedless of social rules,  
 Or poor convention's paltry purblind laws.

FRANKLYN.

Be warned!

PHILIP.

To do my duty. Yours I am:  
 Ready to die if it so please you; ready, too,  
 To stop you in this course. Oh, master! pause  
 And listen to your inner, wiser self.

LANEHAM (*aside*).Brave Philip! [*To him.*] Speak; what is it you would say?

PHILIP.

Brothers! Forget ye that one parent stream  
 Rolls through both veins? Would ye be fratricides?  
 Put up your sword! Back—back,—for shame! Thank  
 heaven  
 With fearful joy for all that ye have 'scaped.

FRANKLYN (*drawing PHILIP aside*).

You know your privilege, and you abuse it!  
 You know me too. There is a point, beyond  
 Which if you drive me, every ill I do  
 Will be tenfold increased. Give me the letters.

ALICE (*to FRANKLYN*).

That, sir, is for you. [*To CLARENCE.*] And this for you.  
 [*Gives the letters from MARGARET.*]

FRANKLYN (*to ALICE*).

I see you gaze affrighted on us all!  
I'll not deceive you. No, you are too good—  
Too brave—too noble to be trifled with.  
There *is* wrong-doing here. But we, believe me,  
Will try like men to set it right.

ALICE.

Like men!

And brothers?

FRANKLYN.

Well, as brothers. Will you now  
Leave us?

ALICE.

Oh yes, and in full faith.

FRANKLYN.

Which I will try to merit.

[*Exit ALICE, FRANKLYN seeing her off with marked  
courtesy.*]

LANEHAM (*aside to PHILIP*).

Ah! a happy change.

PHILIP (*aside to LANEHAM*).

I fear he sees not the impending blow.  
I dread these letters. Keep we on our guard.  
We must use force if—

LANEHAM.

Alice should have stayed.

A woman's pleading look may calm his rage,  
When swords opposing do but tempt him on.

PHILIP.

I'll warn her then. *[Goes off, and presently returns.]*

CLARENCE (*having read his letter, says aside to FREELOVE.*)

Hark! you were right. She loves me!

FREELOVE.

What! and says so?

CLARENCE.

No; but 'tis clear.

FRANKLYN (*alone, in advance with the unopened letter.*)

I would that this were opened, and all told.

Does she again forgive me? "Ah, what bliss!

"I would forgive him, and henceforward swear

"To keep unsleeping watch o'er these bad moods.

"Yes, yes! I have been wrong."

*[Tries to undo the fastenings of the letter.]*

Oh, weak of soul!

Why do I tremble thus? How nervously

My fingers seem to yearn for some great rock

To clutch at, and to stay me in this whirl!

They do refuse to loose the strings she tied.

A happy omen! 'Tis so with our pledge!

There! there! 'tis done. "And now—now would I give

"One-half my wealth to drink of yonder spring

"Ere I read this, could I unnoticed do it.

"Come, 'tis soon o'er."

*[Reads.]*

"This outrage of to-day

Decides me;—breaks all bonds 'twixt us for ever.

Insult not, by your presence, one whose hope

(Her last in life) is—to see you no more.

MARGARET.'

My God, make this a dream!

"I could not bear it true. If I have erred,

"I will repent! but, oh, be merciful!  
 "Let me but draw free breath once more to say,  
 "'Tis but a dream. O God!" What! lost! lost! lost!  
 See her no more! Love her no more! What! wake  
 Morn after morn, through countless days, weeks, years,  
 In that blank darkness of the soul that knows  
 No sun, no moon, no star, no faith, no hope,  
 No friend—no God! Was she not all to me?  
 "Yes! heaven might punish the idolater.  
 "But—Margaret! No! oh no! she could not mean  
 "That I should live—,—and thus! Not even on me,  
 "Or in her thoughts, could she inflict that doom."  
 She means, then, I may die.  
 I lived in her;—she gone, my life goes too,  
 As but a thing of course. What matters it  
 The *how* we die! [*Looks round.*] They watch me. Ha!  
     he had  
 A letter too! What heat runs through my veins,  
 And bursts in sudden flame within my brain!  
 Accepts she him—rejecting me? No—no.  
 [*To CLARENCE.*] Brother, I make to thee a bold request:  
 That letter; may I read it?

CLARENCE.

No, you cannot.

FRANKLYN.

Ha! what! Say that again.

CLARENCE (*turning away*).

I'm sorry—but—

FRANKLYN.

Now, now I see it all. She loves him—takes him.



He triumphs! Ha, he triumphs! Yet he turns  
 Away; no doubt, in pity unto me.  
 My honest, grateful brother pities me,  
 And turns away. Villain! turn yet once more.  
 My life or thine!

*[Rushes towards him. LANEHAM draws in order to stop him; but FREELOVE, also drawing, interposes between LANEHAM and the BROTHER. At the same moment ALICE, with a shriek, rushes in, catches FRANKLYN'S arm, and faints; PHILIP supports her. During all this the dialogue proceeds.]*

CLARENCE.

No, no; I will not fight.

FREELOVE.

Come, come, sir; two swords unto one's no play.

LANEHAM.

Art mad, sir? Let me pass. Nay, then I will!

*[They fight.]*

FRANKLYN.

Here, Philip! take this maiden to the spring,  
 Or she may die.

PHILIP (*supporting her*).

All's lost! Heaven fights against us!

*[Exit with ALICE.]*

FRANKLYN.

Brother, my soul is black enough already:  
 Make it not worse. Hark! Every thought that moves  
 Within my brain reveals some fiend behind it.  
 More and more hideous shapes keep thronging in,

An ever-blackening stream of living crimes.  
Hush! hearken still. Red *Murder* stalks among them!  
Turn, then, I say, and fight this fairly out.

CLARENCE.

No! Not on *my* head be so dread a sin.

FRANKLYN.

Oh! 'tis the sin that hurts you. Ha! ha! ha!  
To blast my life were nothing,—oh, no sin!  
Nought was it—oh, no sin—to stain my bride,  
My virgin bride, with thy solicitings!  
Ha! ha! No sin! none! Moral brother! Ha! ha! ha!  
Come, if a villain, be a bold one too.  
Do something that one may respect. Wilt turn thee?  
Hypocrite! Coward!

CLARENCE (*turning with his hand on his sword*).

Coward!

FRANKLYN.

Come, come, come!

The old blood's not all lost. [CLARENCE *again turns away*.  
Although, I see,  
It lacks encouragement; so there [*strikes him*], and—

CLARENCE.

Hold!

[*He draws, and in a paroxysm of fury attacks*  
FRANKLYN. *They fight. LANEHAM again*  
*vainly attempts to pass FREELOVE. After a*  
*few thrusts, CLARENCE is wounded, and falls.*  
LANEHAM *and FREELOVE run to him, raise*  
*him a little, and try to staunch the wound.*

FRANKLYN.

Is he, then, hurt? What's this upon my sword?  
 Blood?—Blood! My brother's blood! And Margaret's,  
 too,  
 Yet crimsoning my hand. Have I, then, killed him?  
 Comes the dread end I have so long foreseen,  
 When, every frantic impulse realised,  
 We sit among the ruins we have made,  
 And learn the awful truth veiled in the word  
*Irrevocable!* Oh, my brother!  
 [*Throws his sword away, and drops on the ground  
 beside him.*]

Clarence!

Behold me on my knees. 'Tis I! 'Tis Franklyn,  
 Your earliest nurse and playmate. Know you not  
 How I did love you? how exult in you,  
 And in your boyish beauty? Oh, what clouds  
 Have come between us since! Is it too late  
 To break through all? My life now hangs on yours.  
 Say that you are not hurt; not so much hurt  
 But loving hands may soon heal all again.

LANEHAM.

He's faint with loss of blood, nor can we yet  
 Assuage it; else, I think, there'd be no danger.

FRANKLYN.

If that be true, O God, how I will thank thee!  
 But now to act. I'll seek the nearest help.  
 [*Runs off and returns.*]  
 Here comes the Nun, fast hurrying down the hill.  
 She's our best leech.

*Enter JULIA as the Nun, veiled, followed by PHILIP. She runs to CLARENCE, kneels, examines the wound, and begins, with PHILIP'S help, to bandage it. She instructs him by signs.*

PHILIP.

She wishes for some water from the spring.

[FRANKLYN fetches some in a drinking-horn. JULIA sprinkles CLARENCE'S face, and then, as he revives, makes him drink.

CLARENCE (*holding out his hand, which FRANKLYN grasps passionately*).

My brother! I did wrong! I own it now.  
But as I hope for grace at my last hour,  
I did not mean it. No! I never dreamed  
To see or hear from Margaret again.

FRANKLYN.

I do believe you. [*To PHILIP, aside.*] Feel for me, and  
speak:  
He's—safe?

PHILIP.

Yes.

FRANKLYN.

Quite safe?

PHILIP.

Yes, I think so—quite.

FRANKLYN.

God! I do not deserve it. Ha! ha! ha!

[*Shakes hands with PHILIP.*

Remind me of this day in future days,

H

And I will do whatever you shall ask me.

Now run to Alice; tell her all is well. [Exit PHILIP.

[Shakes hands with LANEHAM.

He's safe! A changèd man am I henceforth.

[Shakes hands with FREELOVE.

You love your friend?

FREELOVE.

Ah—yes!

FRANKLYN.

Well, he is safe.

If you are glad, what must his brother be?

CLARENCE (to JULIA).

Kind Nun, no longer let me trouble you;

For, thanks unto your skill, I'm strong again.

I fancy I could stand. Your arm: I'll try.

[She helps him up, and continues to support him  
on one side, while FRANKLYN does the same on  
the other.

FRANKLYN.

Can you walk?

CLARENCE.

Bravely.

FRANKLYN.

Make me not too glad,

Lest I relapse again. Draw round me, friends:

I would say somewhat more ere we depart.

Brother, will you, with all your heart, now trust me?

CLARENCE.

I will. I will. Most truly.

FRANKLYN.

Lov'st thou Margaret?

CLARENCE.

I fear I do.

*[Julia starts, removes her arm, and staggers back.**CLARENCE goes to support her.*

I must nurse you in turn,

If you so tremble. *[Pauses.]* I am yet but weak.Freelove, show *you* the thankfulness I feel.*[FREELOVE advances. She waves him off impatiently, and stands against a bank at the back.*

FRANKLYN.

Another question: And does *she* love you?

CLARENCE.

I—think she does.

FRANKLYN.

Go—take her, then! She's thine!

But do it quickly: spare me many words.

CLARENCE.

Franklyn!

FRANKLYN.

I've said. Here; take this signet-ring

To show to her; 'twill tell her its own story.

But bring it back. Forgive me that one—

*[Pauses, overpowered with emotion.*

Let all remain as fixed for—Saturday.

CLARENCE.

Could you but look into my grateful heart,—

FRANKLYN (*pressing his hand, and interrupting him*).

Dear brother, go. When all is over, seek me.

Till then I shall be best alone. [*To LANEHAM.*] Come, come ;

Your picture, friend ! Ay, come, we'll study that.

[*Exeunt FRANKLYN and LANEHAM on one side, and CLARENCE supported by FREELOVE on the other. JULIA starts forward, gazing, in deep anguish, on CLARENCE's departure. Gradually she drops down on the bank in an attitude of utter forlornness and despair. Scene closes.*]

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Enter PHILIP, hurriedly crossing the stage, and  
LANEHAM meeting him.*

PHILIP.

“Saw you my master?”

LANEHAM.

“Yes; from the little gate,

“Just now, he hurried forth.

PHILIP.

“And which way went?”

LANEHAM.

“Across the common.

PHILIP (*going*).

“I must follow him.”

LANEHAM.

Stay! How is he?

PHILIP.

He has been out all night,  
Wandering in the mist. He will not eat;  
And if he rests, 'tis when he flings his limbs  
Upon the ground, and turns his back to heaven,—  
Trying to choke the fever-fire within,  
By closing every vent. “I saw him lie  
“As dead upon the grass, as the charred tree-trunks



"Scattered about, scarce knowing him from them.  
 "And then, anon—the while I thought he slept,—  
 "He'd leap unto his height, and, with a cry  
 "That thrilled the very heart of Night with fear,  
 "Fly on with frenzied speed,—on—on again,  
 "There where the blackest darkness stretched away."

LANEHAM.

Had he his sword?

PHILIP.

Oh, no! But much I fear  
 He came to fetch it, when, at break of day,  
 Chilled to the very bone with damp and cold,  
 He stole into his chamber. There I found him.  
 'Philip,' said he, 'I'm late! 'Tis time to dress;  
 Go, fetch my sword!'

LANEHAM.

And did you?

PHILIP.

Yes; it seemed best. I wished him not to know  
 How I had tracked him all the long night through,  
 That so I still might watch. I gave it to him,  
 Showing no fear. But had you seen his look  
 As he did grasp it! A lost friend recovered  
 When most we need him could not raise a smile  
 More full of meaning than lit up his face.  
 I thought I then must speak, but—he was gone.

LANEHAM.

Where does he chiefly haunt?

PHILIP.

The lofty hill,

That oaks so richly cover, some miles hence.  
There he and Margaret used to go each day.

LANEHAM.

Haste after him! I'll follow by and by,—  
Perhaps to bring good news.

PHILIP.

Ha! how is that?

LANEHAM.

I think that Margaret loves him spite of all.  
And if she does—: Well, Philip, I will try her.  
We will not hope too soon.

PHILIP.

But will she not  
Ere this have seen and pledged herself to Clarence?

LANEHAM.

No! heaven forefend! Would I had thought of this  
A few hours sooner. Come, then, quick; to work.

*[Exeunt different ways.]*

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## SCENE II.

MARGARET'S *House, as before.*

*Enter MARGARET and HESTER.*

HESTER.

“But why, then, so revolt from what is done?  
“Ah, my dear cousin, look into your heart;  
“Be sure no love for Franklyn lingers there.”

"Sustained  
 "And then  
 "He'd been... Why, cousin, do  
 "That the... in my sou  
 "Fly in... is beauteous fr  
 "Thou..."

Turn your thought  
 Had he...

MARGARET.

He must... of it; and feel  
 Chilled... in the dark,  
 He still... upon a slimy toad  
 'Phillip'... him! Nay, perha  
 Go, fetch... written unto Frank  
 ...'s loved. Loved! ar  
 And dilly... him since he was

—that men may w  
 I shall drop,

Yes, it... they but shake the tr  
 How I...

WALTER.

That so I...  
 Showing...

MARGARET.

When most... "Calm! It  
 More full... You are ever righ  
 I thought... in even current,  
 ... calm skies above,  
 Where the... sun nor frigid ice.

(with emotion).

words if you knew all

MARGARET.

“ Ah! is it so? Forgive me! I grow blind  
“ In my injustice. We were parted long,  
“ And I lost sight of you. Wilt tell me now?—

HESTER.

“ Brief tale: I loved, and had the—*Sun!* Was left,  
“ For one more beautiful,—and there was *Ice*.  
“ But duty saved, and made me—what you see.

MARGARET (*kissing her*).

“ Oh, my own cousin, sweet, and dear, and good,—  
“ Love me and help me, as I will love you.”  
What shall I do?

HESTER.

Retreat while there is time.

MARGARET.

But how?

HESTER.

Show him how baseless were his fears  
That you loved Clarence. Open freely to him  
Your heart and mind.

MARGARET.

And should he find not there  
The love he seeks?

HESTER.

He still but knows the truth. Yet, if not love,  
You have love's germs, which need but Franklyn's breath  
To spring in beauty tender as April's buds,  
And strong and glorious as June's richest flowers.

MARGARET.

Speak not of bliss that I shall never know.

HESTER.

Some barrier stands betwixt you,—break it down.  
 Be frank—be brave. You want to know him better:  
 Use, then, the master-key that unlocks hearts—  
 Your own heart's truth. To put all in one phrase,  
 What mean his jealous doubts? The fear of *you*—  
 The promptings of a base suspicious soul,  
 That you could cure not, nor were worth your trying;  
 Or fear of his own self, which you might cure,  
 Ay, cure for ever in a single hour.

MARGARET.

But if he understand me not?

HESTER.

Too well

Will he be understood.

MARGARET.

But—speak unasked! lay all reserve aside,  
 While he stands bristling in his awful moods  
 Like any porcupine! No, coz; you ask  
 Too great a sacrifice of woman's pride.

HESTER.

Well, let the greater sacrifice, then, come.

MARGARET.

Nay, nay; a truce to all these dread portents.  
 My mind's made up. He ought to—shall—speak first.  
 And then, my dear wise coz, I'll tell him all,  
 Shows he but by one word he cares to hear.

HESTER.

And that word spoken not?

MARGARET.

Then I shall say  
He loves his pride, but he does not love me!  
I am no wife of his! But he will speak it:  
Something does whisper to me he will speak it!  
Hark! hark! I hear a step; perhaps 'tis he.

*Enter CLARENCE.*

CLARENCE (*advancing hastily*).

Dear Margaret!

MARGARET (*repelling him*).

Sir!

[*Then, with a forced smile, holding out her hand.*

Forgive me, Clarence. Oh,  
I have of late so oft forgot myself,  
I seem to fear all else must do so too.  
But you look hurt; you think me harsh, unjust.

CLARENCE.

Oh, no! I feel with you.

MARGARET.

You do, indeed?  
There's a kind moisture in your eye. Ah, yes!  
'Tis my old playmate, with his genial heart,  
Come back to me—a friend;—I know him now,—  
Will speak to him and trust him as of yore.  
[HESTER *offers to go.*  
Nay, cousin, all that I would say you know;  
So do not leave us.

[While CLARENCE fetches chairs for them, MARGARET speaks to HESTER aside.

Would he but release me!  
I speak to him more freely than to Franklyn.  
Oh, if I 'scape this toil!

HESTER.

Nay, hush! he'll hear!

[They all sit.

MARGARET.

Can you forgive—forget—that foolish letter?

CLARENCE.

Forgive! Forget! Through my whole future life,  
Each night and morn my heart must speak its thanks,  
As it does now, upon my bended knees.

[He kneels; MARGARET starts up.

Nay, Margaret, dear; I dared not ask your love  
Until you—

MARGARET (*bitterly*).

Yes! oh, yes; I know! I know!

CLARENCE.

But, sanctioned by my brother—

MARGARET (*interrupting*).

What! what's that?

CLARENCE.

Oh, yes; 'tis so. Then lay aside all fears,  
All maiden scruples. He now sends me here.

MARGARET.

Clarence, that is a— [*pauses*]. You do not speak true  
Or you do play with me. Such sport is death.

Too long I've listened. Franklyn sanction this!  
 Ha! ha! Why, Clarence, you grow bold in love,  
 If we may call this love. I do admire  
 Your hardihood.

CLARENCE (*with dignity*).

Nay, madam; that I love you  
 Is said. If you do not love me, so tell me,  
 And I am gone, to pain you never more.  
 My fault will be self-punished. Why should you,  
 Then, wrong and wound me?

MARGARET.

Is it so indeed?  
 And you are honest? Is it *he* that—Clarence,  
 Heed not my hurried words, or my wild thoughts,  
 But answer me—I may repay you yet,—  
*Did* Franklyn send you here?

CLARENCE (*producing the ring*).

'Show this,' he said;  
 'Twill tell her its own story.'

MARGARET (*looking at it in anguish, aside*).

Yes, 'twas mine,  
 And holds my hair enwoven with his own;  
 Is crusted haply with the blood he drew  
 When he did hurt me by his savage grasp.  
 I'll think of that. Oh, yes; I'll think of that.  
 'Twill stay these senseless tears.

Well, sir, he wishes  
 That I should marry you?

CLARENCE.

He does.



MARGARET.

And I—

I do obey,—will marry you! I will!  
So tell him: change nor word nor letter. Say,  
I WILL. Aught more?

CLARENCE.

Yes; but— [Hesitates.]

MARGARET.

Oh, pray speak out.

“We, who have gone so far, can surely find  
“Little to appal us in the farther still.”  
More wishes has he? My obedience may  
Last out, I hope, all his demands on it.

CLARENCE.

The marriage—it was fixed for Saturday;  
He thinks it best it should not be postponed.

MARGARET.

It *shall* not!—that too tell him. It shall NOT!  
“He has his will: he binds and he lets loose.  
“’Tis his vocation; be it mine to *keep*.”  
There is my hand. You have my pledge. So, take it;  
Bind me. What I may prove when bound, God knows!  
Well—Saturday. May I now ask from you—

CLARENCE.

Oh, treat me as your own. My hopes and aims  
Are henceforth only ministers to you.

MARGARET.

“Then grant me just a little time to think.”  
These changes have been sudden. I would be  
Prepared to do my duty. We’ll—not—meet—

CLARENCE.

Until that day we meet to part no more.

Farewell, dear Margaret. [*Kisses her hand.*]

MARGARET.

Yes; farewell! farewell!

[*Exit CLARENCE.*]

One word from Franklyn had saved me all this!

[*Drops into a chair, covering her eyes.* HESTER  
*approaches and takes her hand.*]

HESTER.

Margaret! Margaret!

MARGARET.

Oh, do not reproach me!

I could not bear that now. Oh! if you knew—

HESTER (*looking off*).

Hush!

*Enter ALICE.*

ALICE.

Master Laneham begs to see you.

MARGARET.

Laneham!

What, Franklyn's friend! Perhaps he comes to—No!

ALICE.

He has a picture with him covered up.

MARGARET.

Something to show me; but not now, not now.

He will excuse me.

ALICE.

Anxiously he spake.

MARGARET.

Ha! Send him in, then.

[*Exit* ALICE.]

“Drowning men, they say,

“Will catch at straws: but then they see the straws.

“Heaven help me! I convulsively strike out

“My hands in the blind hope to find such straws.”

*Enter* LANEHAM, followed by JAMES with the Picture, which he sets down and exit. MARGARET advances to meet and welcome LANEHAM.

LANEHAM.

I need not say how dear the artist holds  
That sympathy which follows all his toil,  
Cheering in failure, gladdening in success.  
This help you gave me. Will you now behold  
The first-fruit of my labours?

“I know its faults. Art is, like life, at best

“But a rich promise—to be performed in heaven.

“For me, I feel as yet like one whose bark

“Has touched in the night on some mysterious shore—

“Piercing with eager eyes right through the dawn,

“To greet the first faint glimpse of a new world.”

[MARGARET approaches to look at the picture.

*With a gesture he stays her.*

Forgive me: may I tell you first its story?

[MARGARET motions to him to proceed.

A man, then, I imagined, dowered at birth  
With all heaven's choicest gifts.\* “Mental power  
“To scale the loftiest alps, and leave behind

\* For representation the passage stands thus:

With all heaven's choicest gifts, save one, alas!  
*He was deformed!*

“ His giant foot-prints for our guide and help ;  
 “ A rich full nature, from whose depths up-welling  
 “ Love leaped into his eyes, and evermore  
 “ Danced in their light, like fountains in the sun.

MARGARET (*aside to HESTER*).

“ That is a touch from Nature, is it not ?

HESTER (*aside to MARGARET*).

“ Oh, yes ; I saw his beamy eyes at once.

LANEHAM.

“ A soul heroic, that would do great deeds,  
 “ And sadly smile to see men thought them great ;  
 “ Of passions strong, yet pure and sweet his life  
 “ As the cold jasmine in the summer's heat.  
 “ Such did I paint him with his natural gifts.  
 “ Add wealth and gentle birth, and you will ask,  
 “ Needs there no ballast for so brave a ship ?”  
*He was deformed !*

MARGARET.

Indeed !

LANEHAM.

That is—I drew him so.

MARGARET.

Go on. [*She and HESTER exchange significant looks.*]

LANEHAM.

It was as if two fairies met  
 Beside his cradle, and one said, ‘ This child  
 Shall taste all earthly excellence and good—  
 A natural king of men, despising crowns !’  
 And then the other : ‘ I will poison all

With but one touch. See here! A little bend  
 Of this soft body. Sister, it is done!  
 And so it was. The good would grow; but still  
 That one small twist inflected his whole soul.  
 "The oak grew up an oak, but gnarled and bent,  
 "As though unto the skies it fought its way  
 "Through ceaseless battle with the cruel storms."  
 I weary you.

MARGARET.

Oh, mind me not! Go on.

LANEHAM.

From childhood up  
 One secret thought walked with him evermore,  
 Like the black shadow of his soul: it was  
 A morbid sense of personal defect.  
 Parental love had saved—but 'twas denied him:—  
 Neglected orphan from his earliest years.  
 And so he turned at bay. Paid jibe with jibe;  
 Scorn still with scorn; hate with intensest hate.  
 "And he grew strong, but overbearing too;  
 "Self-willed and captious, violent and fierce.  
 "A tiger in his native jungles roused  
 "Hardly more fell than he in his worst moods."

MARGARET.

You flatter not your friend—I mean, your hero.

LANEHAM.

But, ah, reverse the picture. You behold  
 An aching heart on all sides looking round  
 For sympathy. Love's Martyr, yet uncalled!  
 Such was the man, and now soon told his story.

MARGARET (*aside to HESTER*).

**The** truth then comes at last. A mortal chill  
**Creeps** o'er me ere I hear it. [*To him.*] Sir, proceed.

LANEHAM.

**He** loved a lady, "fair as the poet dreams of,  
"When, in first burst and affluence of power,  
"He pictures to himself his future bride,  
"Worthy to share with him the Immortals' crown."  
**I** dare not say *she* loved, but she admired—  
**Agreed** to marry him. All the gathered weight  
**Of** past existence at her touch fell off.  
**He** stood upright; in the glad sunshine laughed;  
**The** world was Eden, men fit tenants for it,—  
**For** she had looked on *both*, and smiled on *him*,  
**And** all creation so was glorified.

MARGARET (*aside to HESTER*).

**Oh**, had he told me so! Why did he not?

LANEHAM.

**Ah** me! to think of such a scene as this,  
**Wrapped** in the sudden midnight of eclipse!  
**Between** him and her light there passed once more  
**That** form which had so darkened all his days. [*He pauses.*]

MARGARET.

**That—was—?**

LANEHAM.

White-blooded Doubt! whose freezing breath  
**And** numbing fingers paralyses Love.  
**In** vain he struggled. The old life came back;  
Doubt whispering ever: '*Thou canst ne'er be loved.*'

MARGARET (*passionately*).

Oh, you are wrong! Earth knows of no such case!  
 [*Then more calmly.*] For your ideal lady, were she not  
 Unworthy him you have described so well,  
 Would see all this, and by her constant love  
 And fond devotion would remove such fears.

LANEHAM.

A nobler lady breathed not. Yet, alas!  
 His heart to her was an unopened book.  
 Even in their happiest moments there was felt  
 Some gulf betwixt them—in deep shadow lying—  
 That neither dared explore. Slight words arose,  
 And jealousies. He thought she loved another.  
 I dare not speak of what he suffered then.  
 Dread chaos of the heart! Could you look in,  
 You'd smile no more.

MARGARET.

Oh, I shall smile no more!

LANEHAM.

Peace came again at last—as peace might come  
 To ruined cities when the earthquake lulls  
 From sheer exhaustion. Mark what then he did:  
 The lady he would punish—fearfully!  
 The day of marriage came; the youth was there  
 Whom he supposed she loved.—Behold the rest.

[*Uncovering the picture.*—

MARGARET (*with a burst of emotion, and not looking at the picture*).

Oh, no! he did not love me as thou thinkest!

LANEHAM.

Not love you! Then we do but dream that Love  
 Ever descended, linking earth with heaven.

MARGARET.

To think he loved me thus ; it were such ruin—  
Heart-ruin,—ruin of soul here and hereafter—  
You must not say so to me evermore.  
'Tis now *too late* !

LANEHAM.

Too late !

MARGARET.

I had almost forgiven him—did half hope  
He'd speak to me—would have washed away  
In bitter tears my fault, those hasty letters,—  
When, as I looked for him, his brother came  
With Franklyn's sanction—and to marry me !  
“ Feel for my woman's pride and wounded heart ;  
“ Yet was I true to him ; threw back in scorn  
“ The falsehood, as I thought it, till he showed  
“ My ring, to Franklyn given on our betrothal.”  
Oh, then I fell, crushed to the earth in spirit,  
With but one instinct to support me—Pride !  
I gave my pledge. I will redeem it too.

LANEHAM.

Then all is lost ! I should have been here sooner.

MARGARET.

Why did he treat me so ?

LANEHAM.

Have I not said ?

MARGARET.

Why so resign me ?



LANEHAM.

Surely not too soon,  
When love led on to crime.

MARGARET.

To crime! To crime!

LANEHAM.

You know they fought?

MARGARET.

Fought! and for me! Oh, God!

LANEHAM.

Mad with the fear you and his brother loved,  
Not till he saw that brother's blood pour forth  
Could we restrain his wild terrific course.  
How, then, his love gushed too! Oh, had you seen him  
Play the fond nurse unto the wounded man;  
Heard his exulting thanks to heaven when he was told  
There was no danger; felt, as we all felt,  
The very fountains of the deep break up,—  
When he at last resigned you unto Clarence,—

MARGARET.

Enough! No more! Oh, tell him, tell him not  
What you have seen—now see! My fate is fixed.  
You understand me? Save him all you can.

LANEHAM.

Is there no hope?

MARGARET.

None! None!

LANEHAM.

Then heaven protect you!

[*Aside.*] Unhappy maiden!

O'er her bright field of life, so full of flowers,

How fast she sees the sudden shadow run,

Beneath whose pall henceforth her heart will lie! [*Exit.*]

HESTER.

How feel you now?

[*MARGARET starts, and paces the stage hurriedly without speaking.*]

Nay, speak! dear cousin, speak!

MARGARET.

Hester, look to me. Desperate—wicked—thoughts

Are crowding forth into my darkened brain,

Urging each other, like some midnight mob,

Onwards to *that* which none dare even name.

Were I a man, now, I would call for wine,

And drink!—ha! ha!—like a Bacchante drink!

Nay, frown not! see, I have my wine; these tears,—

These hot salt tears,—these let me riot in.

HESTER.

Come, Margaret, dear, some effort must be made.

What is it moves you so? Your love for Franklyn,

If love it were, seemed but so small a spark,

That your mere will might tread it out at once.

Out with it then, since fate will have it so.

Look back no more. The future take, and make.

Another's happiness is in your hands,

A solemn trust. Clarence has much to charm

The eye and heart of woman. Talents, youth,

A winning mien, a stately graceful form,  
A pliant mind, that you may mould at will.

MARGARET.

Oh, yes, a toy! a pretty—woman's—toy!  
Amusing for a time, then laid aside  
Like toys. But Franklyn is a man! True man!  
One would be led by me, who look for guidance;  
The other, spite of me, would make me tread  
The difficult but glorious upward life.  
Ah, yes! the one I must command; the other  
Would still be king of me! Would'st think it? Franklyn's  
The only man that never flattered me.  
When all that swarm of painted summer flies  
Came floating round me, murmuring of love  
So gently, as they feared the very breath  
Of their own voices would shake off their bloom,  
I would you had seen him—heard him. Then 'twas  
He let into my soul the daylight pure,  
And the rough honest plainly-speaking breeze.  
Taught me I had a mind. Ah, now he adds  
The knowledge of a heart.

HESTER.

You do not mean—

MARGARET.

I do! I do! Away all vain disguise!  
Let who will hear me! All my soul cries out,  
Franklyn, I love thee! Love thee! I do love thee!

HESTER (*gravely*).

Nay—Margaret!

MARGARET.

Franklyn!—ay, too well I love thee  
To give thee such a wife.

HESTER (*severely*).

Why, Margaret—this—

MARGARET.

I know what you would say,—and you may say it  
After a little while. Let me but taste  
This cup delicious! Cry but once—once more—  
Franklyn, I love thee!

All is over! Burst,  
My heart's brimmed fountain! It shall run till dry:  
That will be soon, for no springs nourish it.  
There! I am calm! I smile! Accept my lot!  
Believe me, never more through these firm lips—  
Firm though they quiver—shall the secret pass,  
The dread, sweet secret you have heard just now.

HESTER.

Poor lips,—how white they are!

MARGARET.

White! Are they white?  
At the soul's gates already stand the mutes,  
Announcing death within. Well—kiss me—come!  
*[Exeunt slowly, enfolding each other. Scene closes.]*

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## SCENE III.

*A wood on the edge of a hill. The voices of LANEHAM and PHILIP are heard calling to each other from the depths of the forest. As they cease, enter FRANKLYN, hurriedly, and listening through the thick undergrowth, his whole appearance indicating the disorder of his mind.*

FRANKLYN.

Are these pursuing voices stilled at last?  
Oh, what a trance was that from which they waked me!  
Methought I had been falling—sheer—for ages,  
Down—headlong downwards—in a dizzy whirl,  
Until I struck upon some unknown land.  
Terrible region, with nor sun nor star!  
I scarce could breathe, so thick were dusky shades  
Flitting and gliding, wheeling to and fro.  
While, pale and ghastly, hosts of faces, fresh  
From some new horror, swept like whirlwinds on  
To overwhelm me, till so close they came,  
Our very eyeballs met; and then with laughs  
They did pass onward; but they passed right through me.  
Then, while my warm blood froze to sudden ice,  
I heard a voice,—'twas mocking hers so sweet,  
Yet crying, 'Welcome, Franklyn, welcome here!  
Look round! Be jocund! See here all the wrecks,  
Soul-wrecks, that from Creation's earliest day

Life's surge has cast upon these teeming shores !'

*[The voices of LANEHAM and PHILIP again heard.]*

Hark ! hark ! again they come ! I know them now ;

I must be sudden, or they will prevent me.

*[Holds his sword ready to fall upon it.]*

Margaret ! Margaret ! Margaret !

Sure, all the bitterness of my long past life,

Wrung out in blood and tears, from heart and brain,

Each drop an agony, has been preserved

For this dread hour, that I again may drink it

In one infernal draught, all woes distilled—

Drink, and so die. Well, let me first but drop

One thought of *thee*, pearl-like, into the goblet ;

A richer pearl than ocean ever knew,

For all my soul is in it. Sweet—farewell !

*[Is about to kill himself.]*

What sudden darkness spreads around me thus !

Is it the coming Death, whose mighty shade

Sweeps on so far before ? Or is it not

A mightier than he who stays my hand ?

What means yon Brow of overhanging cloud,

All knitted darkness, with supernal gleams

Of light beneath at the horizon's verge ?

My pulses stop. Does *He* thus look on me,

Before the eyes in lightning-flashes blaze,

Before the voice in rolling thunder speaks ?

*[The sword drops from his hand. He sinks prostrate on the ground, covering his eyes. The storm breaks forth. Thunder and lightning.]*

*Enter PHILIP and LANEHAM.*

PHILIP.

Hush, he is there !

## SCENE III.

*A wood on the edge of a hill. The  
and PHILIP are heard calling to  
depths of the forest. As they cea  
hurriedly, and listening throug  
growth, his whole appearance is  
of his mind.*

FRANKLYN.

Are these pursuing voices stilled at  
Oh, what a trance was that from w  
Methought I had been falling—she  
Down—headlong downwards—in  
Until I struck upon some unknow  
Terrible region, with nor sun nor  
I scarce could breathe, so thick  
Flitting and gliding, wheeling to  
While, pale and ghastly, hosts  
From some new horror, swept  
To overwhelm me, till so close  
Our very eyeballs met; and th  
They did pass onward; but th  
Then, while my warm blood f  
I heard a voice,—'twas mocki  
Yet crying, 'Welcome, Fran  
Look round! Be jocund!  
Soul-wrecks, that from Cre:

PHILIP (*aside*).

Mark that!

LANEHAM (*to him*).

The worst is passed.

FRANKLYN.

No, like this storm,

I die as I have lived,—a thing of gloom  
And tumult, and all passionate moods,  
Of tearful wailing, and of wild despair,  
That cares not what it strikes, so it destroy,  
Its brightest radiance, an incendiary fire.

PHILIP (*aside*).

How he does colour all things with the storm!

LANEHAM (*to him*).

When the heart loses its one anchorage,  
The winds and waves may toss it as they will.  
“The inner light once quenched, external powers  
“Refuse subjection, and become our kings.”

FRANKLYN.

What sudden pause? And why now falls the rain  
As though all clouds in both our hemispheres  
Were pressing hither to this single spot  
To wash me from the globe I thus encumber?  
O God, that I could, like this great storm, weep!  
Poor flowers, how heavily they droop and shiver,  
The tenderest clinging to their sturdier mates!  
So did I think to have one human flower  
Sheltering with me beneath all troubled skies.  
Ha! I must think no more—must feel no more;



But like yon sickly tree, whose root is dead,  
 Wait till the elements complete their work.  
 Lord of myself at last, I take my throne :—  
 Strike me, or spare me ; here, O storm, I wait,  
 I and the world ; for both has heaven forgotten !

*[Sits upon a fallen tree. His head drops upon his hands. The storm gradually ceases.]*

PHILIP (*aside*).

Shall we now speak ?

LANEHAM (*to him*).

Hush, see you not the change ?

*[The sun appears, and becomes more and more brilliant as they speak.]*

Feel you not awed ? Higher than we are here,  
 Watching and guarding, whispering holiest things !

FRANKLYN (*looking up*).

What glow is this that warms my icy limbs ?  
 O heavens ! what radiance—dazzling eye, heart, soul !  
 Who mocks me thus ? Oh, never world I knew  
 Appeared so beautiful. The very ground laughs out,  
 Like a glad Indian child o'er whom is thrown  
 The gorgeous vesture of an eastern queen ;  
 Glittering with all imaginable gems ;  
 Its colours richer than a Titian knows,  
 And more harmonious than his art could mix.  
 'Tis ground no longer, but a living floor  
 Of sparkling, dancing, many-coloured light.  
 Win me not back to suffer all again !  
 I could not look on this—and die—so young !  
 “ Ah, like these tree-tops, rising from the vale

ach the sun's last kiss, I tremble too,  
to and fro, in dreamy golden swoon."

LANEHAM (*aside*).

ell at last. Now let us glide away,  
me towards him as but now we came.  
eath of this must ever pass our lips :  
nderstand me ? Every heart demands  
anctuary, where no feet intrude,  
ven its own, except in hours like these :  
azed in reverently—but we gazed."

[*Exeunt* LANEHAM and PHILIP *softly*.

FRANKLYN.

rt seems bursting with exulting thanks!  
re these birds, awe-mute till now, and now,  
w-freed captives, breaking forth in song  
, heaven's chambers with the noise are ringing.  
e old world's transfigured, and puts on  
uth and beauty, and a virgin bloom  
rom the hand divine. *He* frowns no more,  
ks, and loves, and smiles ; and hence the change.  
les ; and all the falling tears that drop,  
earth's sufferings, from the angels round  
ircling, change into the sudden *bow*,  
rious wedding-ring, that binds once more  
into heaven. O God, the bliss of life !  
ears of rapture—see, they gush at last :  
they thank thee ! Life begins anew.

*Enter* LANEHAM and PHILIP.

[FRANKLYN *holds out a hand to each*.

it speak to you—at least not yet ;  
re is peace at last.

LANEHAM.

And you can bear  
To hear my tidings?—She accepts your brother.

FRANKLYN.

So be it. We will join the bridal-guests.

LANEHAM.

Nay, that were madness.

FRANKLYN.

It were simply right.  
I am her guardian—must protect her fame,  
That might be slandered in this sudden change.

LANEHAM.

You there—the office that belongs to you—

FRANKLYN.

I must fulfil, and give the bride away :  
It shall be done.

LANEHAM.

But why this martyrdom ?

FRANKLYN.

Dear friend, the secret of my past is learned :  
Our sorrows are the steps before heaven's gate. [*Exeun*

END OF ACT IV.

## ACT V.

SCENE I. *A Heath.*

*Enter FREELOVE and BERTHA, meeting.*

BERTHA.

**Y**ou wished to see me, sir?

FREELOVE.

Yes, Bertha—yes.

**Y**our child's in danger.

BERTHA.

Sir! In danger, said you?

FREELOVE.

**A**nd moments now are precious. Each one bears  
**U**pon its wings the freight of common years.

BERTHA.

**S**peak!

FREELOVE.

Yes; but first one word of frank confession.

**I** loved your dear one. Bertha, feel for me.

**C**ould you look on her daily, and not love?

**B**ut I forgot myself, and her, and him

**W**ho was her lover and my only friend.

**B**ut oh, my punishment!

You may well guess how then she changed towards me.  
 Since that sad hour one only hope I've had :—  
 To do her service ; and the time is come !  
 Clarence to-morrow Margaret will marry,  
 Unless we stop him.

BERTHA.

Ah, sir ! my poor child  
 Pines for his love ; if *that* be gone, indeed—

FREELOVE.

But it is *not* gone ! There is no more strength  
 Or substance in his love for Margaret  
 Than we all dream of in chance summer-nights :  
 He thinks that she loves him ; 'tis that deludes him.

BERTHA.

And does she not ?

FREELOVE.

You would not ask me, Bertha,  
 Had you but heard how Clarence was received,  
 Even while she gave her promise.

BERTHA.

Were it so—

FREELOVE.

It *is* so. Pride, and the entangling thoughts  
 That move a woman, young, rich, beautiful,  
 If she once fancies she's too little cared for,  
 Will be her ruin, unless Julia save.  
 Think of all this. Think what a chain of woe :  
 Franklyn and Margaret, Julia and her lover,  
 All alike wandering in conflicting paths,  
 Who might, like double stars, harmonious move.

BERTHA.

Can you advise her if you meet at once ?

FREELOVE.

'Twas that hope brought me here. Send Julia to me.  
Ask her for once confidingly to trust me ;  
It is her work in which I labour now.    *[Bertha going.*  
Stay : tell her also there is that to do  
Will save some hearts, even if not her own.  
Her noble nature cannot that resist,  
For she alone can do it.

BERTHA.

She shall come.

FREELOVE.

You do not doubt me ?

BERTHA.

No, sir ; she shall come.    *[Exit.*

FREELOVE.

Now, then, to strike the last decisive blow.    *[Whistles.*

*Enter TWO RUFFIANS.*

The litter's ready,—covered close with curtains ?

BOTH RUFFIANS.

Ay, ay, all right !

FREELOVE.

You know the Greetwell Oak ?

FIRST RUFFIAN.

Know it ? How many a moonlight night  
Have I made love beneath its branches ! There

Poor Margery and I—Pshaw! D—n it, sir!  
Go on.

FREELOVE.

Beneath that oak a lady meets me :  
Conceal yourself and fellows in the copse  
That grows close by. A signal I will give ;  
Then all rush out,—seem to attack us both ;  
But throw this veil across her head and arms ;  
Securely tie it,—bear her to the litter,  
And fly unto the place I told you of.  
Once in your power, let no word be spoken  
By her or you. Take heed she raise no cry,—  
Keep the by-paths,—avoid all curious eyes.

FIRST RUFFIAN.

Oho, this is a ticklish job, I see ;  
We'll do our best ; but—eh?—you understand.

[FREELOVE gives money.]

FIRST RUFFIAN.

Ha! ha! He knows the world!

SECOND RUFFIAN.

We, too! Ha! ha!

[*Exeunt*]

FREELOVE.

So—all is well. Within two hours at most  
The marriage will be over. By that time  
Julia is safe, and where no help can come.  
Then shall she learn her lover's lost for ever.  
Then she is mine—is mine—at all risks mine!  
“ But must I marry her if she resist ?  
“ Fool! Marry her? Dost know in all this land

more truly virgin, heart more pure,  
 more simply innocent than hers?  
 Ah, at least, none know so well as I.  
 A spot,—I own I would 'twere not so.  
 For; like the sun's, it does but make  
 The brightness shine more clearly out.  
 It be mine!" The terms,—why chance shall  
 I le. [Exit.

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SCENE II.

LANEHAM'S *Studio as before.* BERTHA *discovered.*

BERTHA.

He is gone. I hope I have done right. [*Looks off.*  
 What does this mean—Master Laneham dressed  
 and in such magnificence?

*Enter* LANEHAM, *dressed for the marriage.*

LANEHAM.

How she hides within her breast  
 The secret, that still eats its walls!  
 No boy could bear more gallantly  
 The anguish of his living theft.  
 What has she stolen the love some other claims?  
 What mystery—more than I have dreamed of.  
 I wish but to catch my questioning look.  
 Ah!

BERTHA.

Whither thus?



LANEHAM.

With heavy heart  
I go unto the marriage.

BERTHA (*in alarm*).  
Marriage?

LANEHAM.

Yes.  
Poor Franklyn! 'Tis his martyrdom to-day.

BERTHA.

You frighten me! Said you 'to-day?'

LANEHAM.

To-day.  
Why all this iteration?

BERTHA.

But—to-day!  
*To-morrow* I was told it did take place.

LANEHAM.

Who told you that?

BERTHA.

The friend of Clarence—Freelove.  
[*Wringing her hands.*] Oh, my poor child! God help  
her! She is lost!

LANEHAM (*grasping her arm*).

Woman, speak out! or I will wring truth from thee!  
Nay—my good Bertha—but her brother 'tis  
Who urgeth, who conjureth you to speak.

[*He pauses; then, with a sudden change of expres-  
sion, and suppressed voice.*]

Freelove! Is *he* the man?

BERTHA.

Oh, no, no, no!

LANEHAM.

His business, then, with Julia?

BERTHA.

'Twas to find  
Some way to stop this most ill-omened match.

LANEHAM.

My God! I see all now! 'Tis Clarence? Speak!

BERTHA.

It is—alas!—it is!

LANEHAM.

My God! My God!

What, of all living men, *he*!—only he?  
Franklyn's sole brother! Must I slaughter him?  
Offer him up in vengeance to the gods,—  
My own dear household gods,—by him o'erthrown?  
Why did I learn the truth at all—if this?

BERTHA.

Forgive me—Julia's danger—

LANEHAM.

Danger! What?

BERTHA.

This Freelove—[*hesitates*] he—

LANEHAM.

Well, he—?

BERTHA.

Did love her too.

LANEHAM.

Did he? Go on!

BERTHA.

And he did try to win her.

LANEHAM.

Why, these were friends indeed! My sister 'tis  
We speak of, Bertha, and my whole soul sickens;—  
Quick, then; an end to all these grim revealings:  
Why came this Freelove?

BERTHA.

Penitence—professing—  
For his long-mourned offence; and in the hope  
To do her service, for he was assured  
Clarence and Margaret did not love each other.

LANEHAM.

There he was right enough.

BERTHA.

But did he know  
*This* was the marriage-day?

LANEHAM.

He did.

BERTHA.

You're sure?

LANEHAM.

He took his leave last night. His father ill,  
He dared not wait, he said, another morn.

BERTHA.

Oh, heaven! the child! He then has lured her forth

Just at the time when Clarence should be wed.  
Oh, with what object? I—I dare not guess!

LANEHAM.

Lurks there so base a villain 'neath God's skies?  
Give me my sword. [BERTHA fetches it.

Despair itself throws out  
One little comfort: Freeloze, thou and I  
Will talk it over, only let us meet!  
Aha! this is, no doubt, the master-mind,—  
The secret spring that moved all this late mischief!  
Bertha, few words and pregnant! First, the place?

BERTHA.

The Greetwell Oak.

LANEHAM.

Oh, that I could but hang him  
Upon its topmost bough! Well,—know you more?

BERTHA.

No, no,—alas!

LANEHAM.

No matter. I will track him  
As never Indian hunter clung to trail.  
“My only fear is, I may be too late.  
“Sure Time, like Joshua's sun, might now stand still  
“In such a cause as this. Be of good cheer!”  
Oh, trust me, Bertha, I will bring her back!

[*Exeunt. Scene closes.*

## SCENE III.

*A Hall, divided from the Chapel beyond by a rich Gothic screen, with painted windows.*

*Discovered the* PRIEST, FRANKLYN, MARGARET, CLARENCE, HESTER, SIR SIMON RANKEL, PHILIP, ALICE, GUESTS, BRIDESMAIDS, &c.

*Enter* SERVANT.

FRANKLYN.

Where's Master Laneham? Has he not yet come?

SERVANT.

No, sir; nor can I see him on the road.

[*Exit*]

FRANKLYN (*in advance*).

What means his absence, and at such a time?

I need him now; and yet I dare not pause:

No; I will bid the priest commence at once.

[*Aloud.*] We will not wait. [*Movement among the guests.*]

MARGARET (*to* HESTER).

Stand by me. Hold my hand.

FRANKLYN.

"'Tis cruel of him. Little does he think

"How big with fate the slightest things may seem

"To eyes that seek for help, though what they know not.

"Business of moment must it be that keeps him.

"What if for me? Ha! Franklyn, hast forgot

"The prince who climbeth (in the Arab tale)

"Some steep and hideous mountain, where he knows  
 "'Tis death but to look back; and where the powers  
 "Of Evil, gathering in their utmost strength,  
 "People each step, and sound, and breath, and glance,  
 "Until there seems not in earth, air, or heaven,  
 "One spot untainted but his own great soul?  
 "Like him, I will press onward. Back, then; back,  
 "Insidious whisperers of the bliss of love!  
 "And ye, who threaten me with woe for her,  
 "I know ye all—all! I will not look back!"

[Goes to MARGARET, who had not noticed his approach.]

Margaret!

MARGARET (*starting*).

Yes, Franklyn, I am ready.

[FRANKLYN takes her hand.]

FRANKLYN.

**Clarence!** [*Takes his hand; then says to MARGARET,*  
 As your true guardian, and—your loyal—friend,  
**[To CLARENCE]** And as your brother, do I stand here now  
**To** do the duty you expect from me.

[*The guests approach.*]

This was my marriage-day. You all know that.  
 Perhaps you wonder why he takes my place.  
 There are who would suspect the Moon herself,  
 In her white chastity and lovely law,  
 Because some lunatic, or lover wild  
 In his sick frenzy, raves upon her name.  
 I know how weak and idle it must seem  
 To think that one as beautiful as she—  
 As high, as pure, as good,—can need my breath  
 To blow away the petty clouds, earth-born,

Earth-clinging, that might seek to veil  
 The glorious radiance that still shines above.  
 Yet, learn the simple truth. [*Pauses.*] She did reject me.  
 And—rightly—did reject!

HESTER (*looking anxiously to MARGARET*).

What ails you?

MARGARET.

Nothing.

FRANKLYN.

You will all witness that.

MARGARET.

Oh, that this weight  
 Would rise from off my brain for but one minute,  
 One second, of clear thought! I pledged my word.  
 And must I for that act see life shut up,  
 As the poor prisoner sees it, when his judge  
 Records his death-doom, and puts by the book?

FRANKLYN.

Clarence, my brother, you will find in this

[*Presenting a paper—*

Your title to a fortune meet with hers.

MARGARET.

(Oh, surely—surely *he* will speak!

[*She looks anxiously towards CLARENCE, who takes the paper, kisses his brother's hand, and bends over it in deep emotion.*

No—no!

He's silent as the grave he makes for me.

FRANKLYN.

Yet one word more. If any here there are  
 Whom I by word or deed offended ever,  
 Let them forgive me in their inmost hearts,  
 For I have earned it—in the rightful way.  
 Ha! friends, behold the portrait of my life:  
 Yon great black tree bestriding the hill-top,  
 Bare arms extended, right across the sun,  
 As though the daring rebel strove to snatch  
 The halo-crown from off the day-king's head,  
 That its own branching midnight might grasp all.  
 Vain fool! Thus did I think to subject life  
 To all my dark and discontented moods.—  
 Well, that is over. Come, we waste the hours.

MARGARET.

I cannot speak. And yet no tranced creature  
 Coffined alive, and hearing the last knock  
 On the last nail, could struggle more to break  
 This frightful silence! Pledged! What could I say?  
 No, I am mute, and must be mute for ever.

FRANKLYN.

Now, holy sir, we wait.

*[A procession is formed, and is about to move towards the chapel, when MARGARET starts forward and listens.]*

MARGARET.

Hush! Stop! I thought I heard a sound—feet—men  
 In hurried movement. *[Sees all looking at her.]*

What is that to me!

Nay, I must smile—must laugh. Ha! ha! to think



What idle thoughts will come at such a time.

[*Aside.*] O God, what folly shall I yet display  
Ere this be past! Poor wretch! What could help th~~is~~e?

[*Procession moves.* MARGARET again st~~arts~~arts.

There are strange voices! I'll not stir until—

I mean, we'd better see who 'tis that comes.

[LANEHAM heard without, crying hoarsely 'FRANKLYN!' 'Where is he?' Then he enters hurriedly, sword in hand, and in a state of extreme excitement. A general movement.

LANEHAM (*to* FRANKLYN).

They are not married?

FRANKLYN.

No! But—

LANEHAM.

Ha! ha! ha!

[*The sword drops from his hand, and he grasps FRANKLYN's arm for support.*

" One hour ago, the very time you fixed  
" I should be here, I was five miles away.  
" No horse—no litter—and within my arms  
" One whom I could not leave, and must support.  
" Oh, it seemed madness but to try to help you—  
" Doomed! doomed! Yet Fate and I did struggle hard  
" For mastery. Three times she threw me down  
" Breathless and nerveless, death in every limb,  
" My precious burden fainting by my side;  
" And I resigned all hope to reach in time,  
" Impiously asking, 'Is there rule in Heaven?'  
" But still your voices cried to me for aid,  
" And made me spring unto my feet once more.

“ And though life’s glow burnt dim, I still heaped on  
 “ A future year each minute to the flame,  
 “ And so I reached you—and—my friend—in time!”

CLARENCE (*advancing*).

To-morrow, Master Laneham, we will speak.

[*Then to the guests.*]

Go on!

LANEHAM.

Stay! I forbid the banns!

CLARENCE (*fiercely*).

Forbid!

LANEHAM (*pointing to his sword on the ground*).

A sword lies in your path—stumble not o’er it;  
 ’Tis dangerous—believe me. *One* has fallen.

CLARENCE.

Stained! And with blood?

LANEHAM (*taking it up*).

Feel you not astir

Deep sympathies within you at its sight?

Ye were no common friends!

CLARENCE.

Friends! Freeloze’s is it?

Why do I parley then, who should avenge?

Will you, sir, forth with me? [*Beckoning him.*]

LANEHAM.

Your bride! she waits;

And one, too, waits without, whom I brought here

To do you honour. Nay, why drops your sword?

CLARENCE (*aside*).

My God! What means he?

LANEHAM (*whispers to PHILIP, who goes off. Then to FRANKLYN*).

Yet a little while!

See you not in my eyes what I shall say?

FRANKLYN (*who is very pale, trembles, and says in deep emotion*).

Though bound upon the stake, I—I—have passed

The mortal agony! Would you unloose me

To show the beauty—boundlessness of life,

Then thrust me back into the flames once more?

MARGARET (*to HESTER*).

What does he say? Oh, I grow dizzy—sick!

LANEHAM (*to FRANKLYN*).

Call up your manly soul. It will be needed.

Oh, what a damned plot is this my sword

Has now cut through, entangling all our souls!

*Re-enter PHILIP with JULIA deeply veiled.*

[LANEHAM *meets her, and throws aside her veil.*

Behold—my sister! Her seducer there!

[*Pointing to CLARENCE.*

CLARENCE.

Julia!

FRANKLYN.

Seducer! Clarence? [*Looks at him inquiringly.*

CLARENCE.

It—is—true.

FRANKLYN.

True! I would thou hadst died, then, at my hand!

CLARENCE (*to LANEHAM*).

What outrage did you speak of? Tell me that!

FRANKLYN.

Was she in danger?

LANEHAM.

While the marriage here  
Was going on, Freeloze—his friend!—took care  
My sister should be absent; lured her forth  
By such a lie, not e'en hell's fiends had used it,  
Had they first looked upon her guileless face.  
She, only she, could now this marriage stop  
Which would take place 'to-morrow,'—so he said;  
And so she went,—to hear that all was over!  
Well planned—oh, was it not?—just then to fall  
Down at her feet, and cry, 'Avenge yourself!  
You see what Clarence is, and who he loves!  
Accept me—marry me! If you refuse,  
Why force—'

CLARENCE (*starts*).

Force!

LANEHAM.

There the villain was cut short.  
The avenger—on his track—had reached him then.  
He tried to stop me;—an army had not done it!  
I scarce know how I struck; but I passed on  
Right o'er his bleeding form, and she was safe!  
My captured bird still trembles, though set free.

CLARENCE.

But, Julia—Julia—you do not believe  
That I knew aught of this?

L

JULIA.

No!

CLARENCE.

That is sweet!

Oh, Julia, see, the scales fall off my eyes;  
Hear me, now hear me! "Oh, I could as soon  
"Lie to high heaven itself as unto you."  
How I have been deluded, step by step,  
By him I thought my friend, I will not dwell on:  
That I could be so tempted is enough.  
But that I love you still,—lo, here the proof!  
Margaret, your pledge I gratefully give back;  
Love me, or love me not, 'tis all the same,  
For I have found at last my heart is here.

MARGARET.

Free! I am free again! again! O God!

LANEHAM.

Now, Franklyn, see you not what all this means?

FRANKLYN.

That she does not love him. But loves she me?  
My senses reel. I dare not trust my heart  
One nearer step until she—[*to her*] Margaret—

MARGARET (*with a cry of joy*).

Franklyn!

FRANKLYN.

God! Is it so, indeed? Come! come!

MARGARET (*about to throw herself into his arms, suddenly stops*).  
Stay, Franklyn—hear me first. Oh, hear my crime.

FRANKLYN.

**W**hose crime? Oh, speak it; to all else 'twill be  
**N**ew virtue, that to reach we must not dream of.

MARGARET.

**W**hy did I give my pledge to marry him?

FRANKLYN.

**I** asked it from you.

MARGARET.

But you did not know

**I** loved another. Franklyn—I loved you!

[*She falls upon his neck.*]

FRANKLYN.

**H**ow shall I bear these ecstasies of bliss?

**I**s it all true? Your hand? your form? your face?

**Y**our lips? Oh, clasp me; make me sure 'tis true.

[*Enfolds her in a long and passionate embrace.*]

**W**hat love, devotion, life-long care, and trust,

**C**an make me worthy of the heaven you ope?

[*They retire a little.*]

CLARENCE (*aside*).

She heard me, but no kindling of the cheek

**R**esponded. "Still she shuns my eye—my touch—

"And stands aloof in that strange silence there.

"And her pale face—oh, heaven! how sweet it is!—

"Grows yet more rigid in its marble hue."

I know not what I fear, and yet I tremble.

[*To her.*] Julia! [*She turns and looks upon him in deep  
silence.*] Oh, look not with those awful eyes.

In mercy speak!

JULIA.

What would you, sir?

CLARENCE.

Sir! Julia!

Do you not know me?

JULIA.

Some dream-like vestiges,  
Glittering but ghastly, float before my eyes;  
But that is all; I know now it is day.

CLARENCE.

Oh, this is cruel. "I do own and feel  
"How deep your wrongs; and my whole life to come,  
"In expiation spent, will be too short.  
"But, Julia—Julia!" Should you not forgive me?

JULIA.

You are forgiven.

CLARENCE.

Forgiven!

JULIA.

Yes.

CLARENCE (*joyfully*).

Then--

[*Advances. She with a stern gesture restrains him*]

JULIA.

Keep from me!

CLARENCE (*trembling*).

You do love me still?

You do not answer. You are moved. O Julia!  
In vain you strive to check those truthful tears;

Oh, fearful chasm! Though crossed in one short night,  
The joyous girl who entered at one side  
Emerged a life-worn woman at the other.  
That gulf must I re-cross—till face to face  
This weary spectre sees its former self,  
The summer morning of my maiden soul?  
Must I remember how all things did love me?  
Life's shadows then were but life's tendernesses,  
The soft care-clouds behind the mother's smile.  
Must I still listen to the thronging thoughts  
That show me what I was, when all life's duties  
Were duties not to me, but quiet pleasures?  
When one would often ask me in my work  
What I did sing of, or what air was that?  
And I could only shake my head, and smile,  
And say, 'I did not know that I was singing.'

CLARENCE.

'Twill all come back to you. It will! It shall!

JULIA.

'Twas then you came, looked in my eyes, and smiled,  
And the wide earth gushed forth in sudden flower.  
The air seemed but an instrument, God-given,  
On which the angels could not cease to play  
Divinest music. Every faculty  
Was strung to new enjoyment—highest pitch.  
The whole vast universe seemed marching on  
To some great festival that Love did hold,  
And you its priest. My own life died out  
For something richer—greater you infused.  
I was not but in you. And we walked on,  
Wrapped in each other and the purple light,



Through one unbroken vista of deep joy,  
 A heaven on earth, to which no end we saw  
 But heaven in heaven. My God! The sudden stop!  
 The precipice! The horror! Sense of fall!  
 The world and all its eyes! Its thoughts of me!  
 My brother! And oh, worst of all—of all—  
 You—dreaming on. While he who oped my eyes  
 Did it to tempt me. God! O God! Then first  
 I drank unto the dregs the cup of shame!  
 But it will madden me to live once more  
 That fearful hour! What saved me? Love for you!  
 The love you'd take from me.

CLARENCE.

My frenzy spake,  
 Not me. I know you loved me. Love me still.  
 But it is useless! Not one word you hear;  
 All senses shut to me.

JULIA.

Ay, Love did come  
 Down to the deep abysses where I lay,  
 And whispered comfort; checked despairing tears;  
 Bade me no longer strive, by thoughts, to solve  
 The cruel problem that did so confuse me,—  
 You would be lost, and I, and all, unless  
 One did act quickly, and that must be me.  
 I had no guide—no friend. I knew but this,  
 It must be right, no matter at what cost,  
 To struggle backwards to the brother left.  
 And he received me, cherished me. Oh, God!  
 The blessedness of home was mine once more;  
 And then I called to you. You did not come.

No; you sent him, the Tempter, unto me!  
 But even that, spiritless that I was,  
 I did excuse you. It was not until  
 I heard you,—while I—trembling—staunch'd your  
 wounds,—

CLARENCE.

What! You the Nun!

JULIA.

Own you did love another,—  
 Saw you depart to marry her—that I—  
 Resolved—

CLARENCE (*throws himself at her feet, and holds her dress*).

Stay! Stay! Keep back the fatal word!  
 In mercy stay. Behold me at your feet,  
 Heart-broken, crushed! Without the strength to lift  
 An arm to ward from me the impending blow.  
 I can no more resist,—then can you strike?  
 Back to my brother, see, I give his wealth.  
 No sanction ask but yours. I'll work for you;  
 In meanest poverty feel rich with you.  
 Let me—repair—in—marriage—

JULIA.

Marriage, sir!

Was I not married to you in my soul?  
 And you in yours divorced me? All is said.

[*She pauses, then with great effort and emotion.*

Lo, Clarence Franklyn, think me dead henceforth!

[*Draws the veil over her face. CLARENCE remains stupified with anguish, burying his head in his hands, while FRANKLYN raises and tries to comfort him.*

LANEHAM.

**M**y own brave sister!

[JULIA, *with a great cry, falls upon his neck.*

MARGARET (*to JULIA*).

Make me sister too ;

**O**ur sex is glorified in you to-day.

[JULIA *kisses her hands. They retire a little with*  
LANEHAM.

FRANKLYN (*to CLARENCE*).

**A** righteous judgment I dare not impugn,

Although it fall upon a brother dear.

**C**ome, listen to me. All that can be done

To influence her future I will do.

**K**eepe you this fortune. Your own master be.

**E**arn the forgiveness you now seek in vain.

**I**'ll shape you a career of noble life ;

**P**ress on it manfully. Each forward step

May bring you nearer her. Time ripe—then come !

[CLARENCE *wrings his brother's hand in silence,*  
*and retires.*

Now turn we to the light ! My foster-brother,

Mine own bold, honest, truthful-speaking Philip,

You, who did love to follow me, must not

Desert me at the altar. Alice, see, [Gives a paper.

If you do leave us, here is that will smooth

Your future path.

PHILIP.

Nay, we shall never leave you.

Unless 'tis at your bidding.

ALICE.

Never! Never!

[FRANKLYN joins their hands.]

LANEHAM.

Franklyn, we stay for you. Your hour is come.

[Pointing to the chapel.]

FRANKLYN.

One moment pause. Oh, let my proud heart play  
The miser o'er its treasures. Friends, I asked—  
Atheist that I was—if love existed?

And thus you answer—hem me in with love.

*Servant!* who makest that poor title shine

High o'er the loftiest dignities of earth,

Lighting the path to there where all men serve.

*Brother!* who art already in my eyes

That which thou wilt be to the slower world's,

The frank, the gallant, manly, loving spirit,

Dearer for all the expiated past.

*Friend!* Wilt thou tell me? Is there in the reach

Of this blue firmament a human tongue

Or arm can show me how I may repay

But one ten thousand-thousandth part of all

The debt I owe you? I am beggared quite.

*Mistress!* But no—for you there is but this,

The deep rich silence of my trembling heart,

That dares not let its precious secrets forth,

Even to the air, except in one word—wife!

On to the altar! Full is my cup of bliss!

[Procession moves. The curtain falls.]

5



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